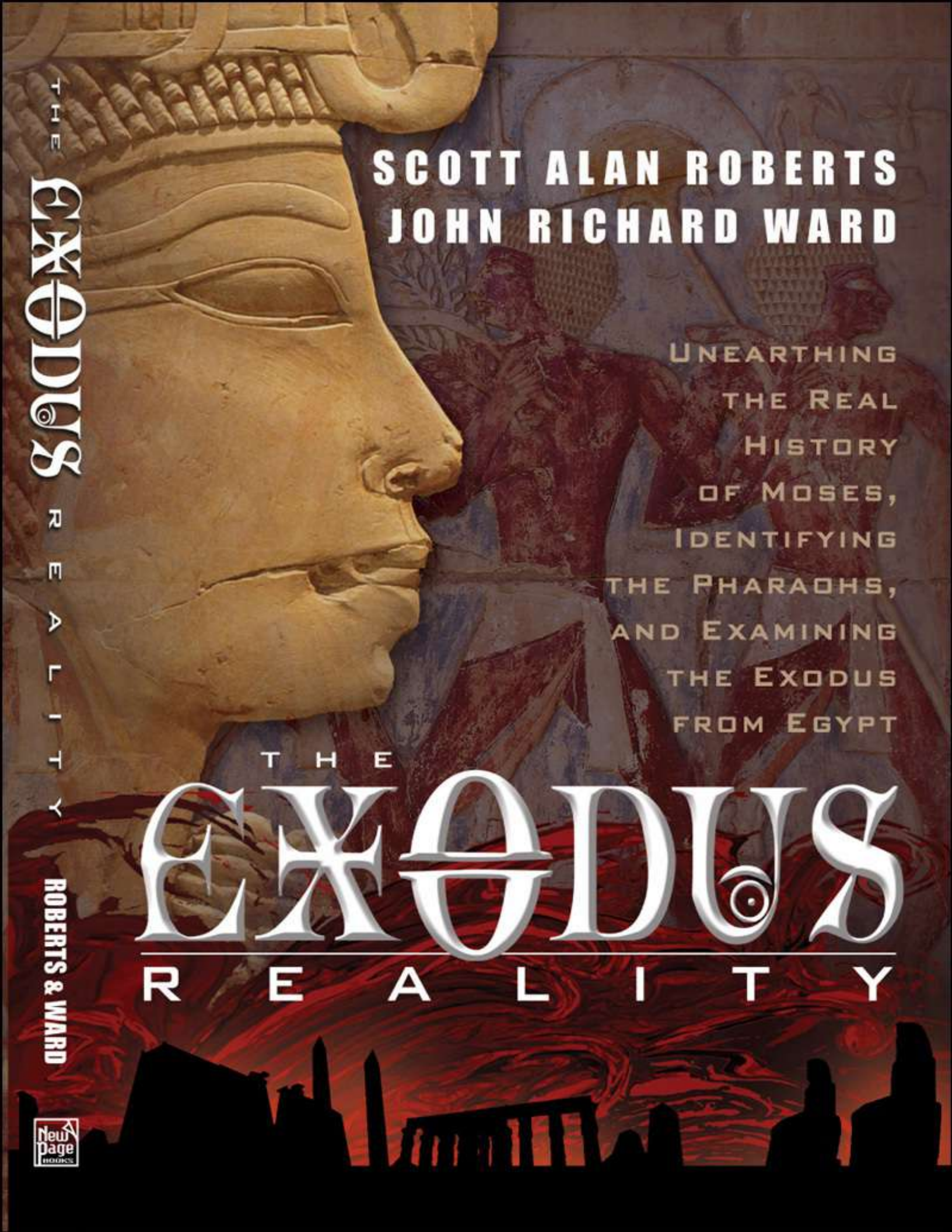
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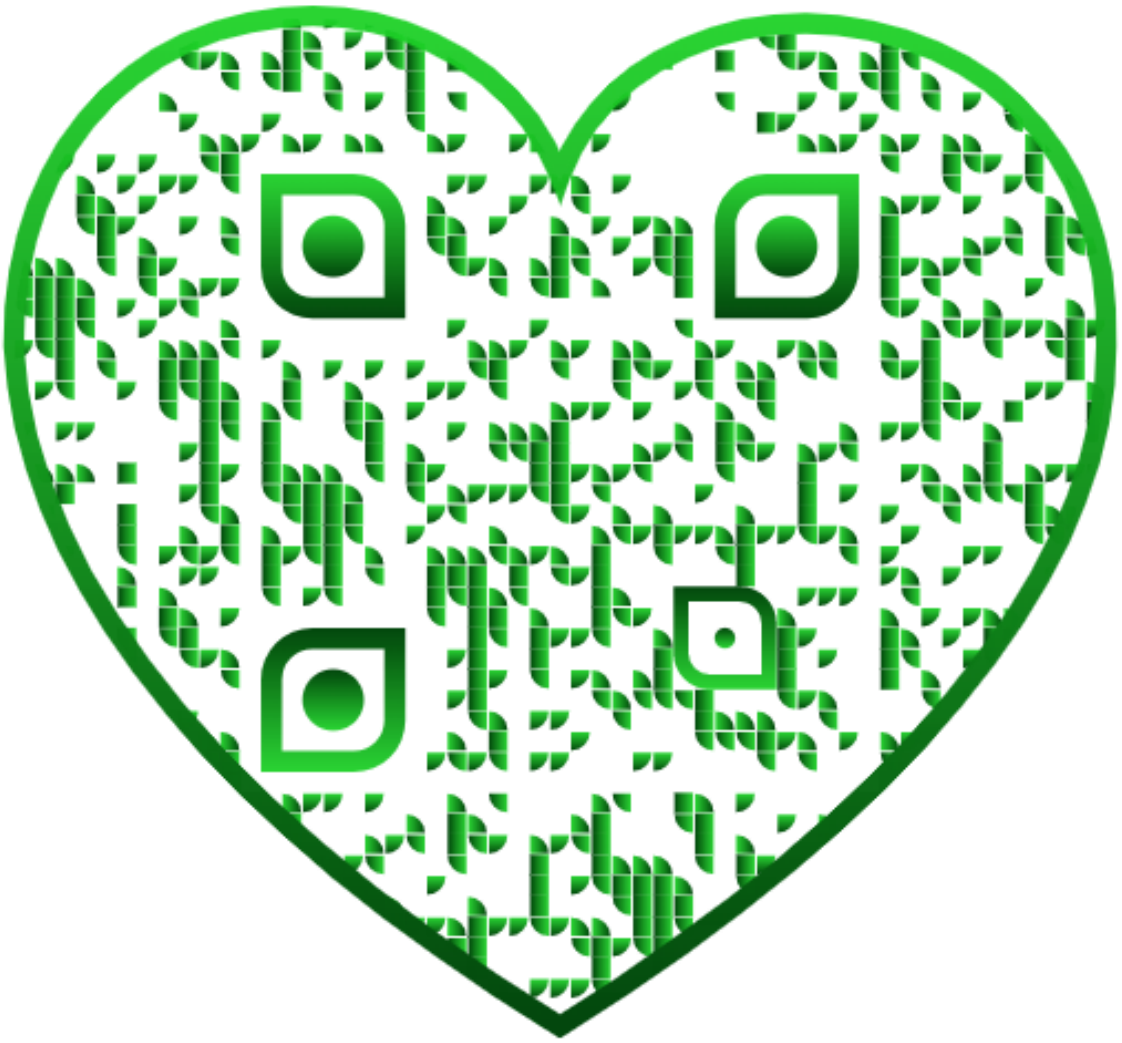

THE EXODUS REALITY

UNEARTHING THE REAL HISTORY OF MOSES,
INDENTIFYING THE PHARAOHS, AND
EXAMINING THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT

BY
SCOTT ALAN ROBERTS
AND
JOHN RICHARD WARD

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Foreword

Despite the manifold volumes of Christian apologetics texts lining seminary library shelves, filled with seemingly substantive proofs for every single aspect of biblical history, the truth of the matter is there are still a great many mysteries surrounding the geography, cultures, tribes, and even individuals who play a central role in the history of both Judaism and Christianity. This is never more clear than in grappling with historical evidences for the tremendously important personality we know as Moses, and the event known as the Exodus.

For all that the Old Testament says of him—his childhood and early adult years living as an Egyptian in the royal house, his slaying of the task master, down to the plagues he announced, and the eventual Exodus—for the brutal truth is we know very little. You see, the Old Testament was not written to be a history book, no matter how much Christian theologians and apologists would like it to be. It is a document conveying just enough of the human history of the time and place for readers to understand the divine history behind it. Thus, we do not know a great many things about Moses.

Judaism has a great many things to tell us about Moses that, to our shame, we Christians are either ignorant of, or simply reject. Take for example the many traditions secreted away in the Midrash, an ancient collection of explanations of Old Testament texts, touching on legal issues and moral issues, and filling in the gaps in the various Old Testament accounts regarding people, places, and things. They tell us of events in the life of Moses that we would perhaps never have known. Things such as the tradition that Moses had been a king in the Sudan, perhaps connecting him to the Hyksos. Or how about the story of a young Moses playing with the Pharaoh's gold crown and throwing it on the floor? The Pharaoh, upon hearing of it, decided to test Moses. He devised a plan by which he would present Moses with two choices. There would be two platters: one holding the golden crown, and the other a burning coal. If Moses took the crown, the Pharaoh would know the young boy had some idea of the insolence of having thrown

it on the ground previously (because he would understand its symbolism), and the Pharaoh would have Moses killed. However, if Moses chose the burning coal, he would be considered innocent, because he could not distinguish between the two. According to the Midrash, Moses started to take the golden crown when an angel pushed his hand, causing the young boy to grab the burning coal. Moses then touched the coal to his mouth, burning his tongue, and leaving him with a speech impediment for the rest of his life.

The Midrash also relates a very strange part of the Exodus story with relation to the Golden Calf incident that perhaps lends credence to part of the theory presented in this book: Moses was quite comfortable with Egyptian religion. The Midrash tells us Moses separated himself to speak to God privately about the matter of the Israelites' worship of the golden calf. According to the Midrash, Moses said, "This golden calf may be thy coadjutor, O God. Thou causest the sun to shine: the golden calf will take over some of the workings of nature, and may cause the rain to descend. Thou wilt send down the dew, and the golden calf will cause the herb to grow." Moses received the merited rebuke from God, who said, "Thou also hast become an idolater; is there any power in that idol which the people have made themselves as a god? Is it anything but inanimate matter?" (The Midrash, Exodus Rabbah, page 86)

Indeed it appears from the traditions of Judaism that there is much we do not know about Moses, and by proxy the Exodus. Scotty Roberts and John Ward present herein two different theories with regard to the figure of Moses and the Exodus. Theories that Christians and Jews alike should examine with an honest and open mind, not leaving faith at the door, but allowing for a mature faith that embraces historical evidences that, while perhaps not found within the sacred texts of our respective religions, may provide more answers for us, even as extra-biblical texts such as the Midrash do. In the end we may find that our faith is advanced, our embrace of the truths of our religions bolstered, and our sense of their place in human history vindicated.

—Father Jack Ashcraft, OSBM
Byzantine Catholic Priest

Preface
by John Richard Ward

For years, I have been captivated by the somewhat-obvious connections between the biblical account of Exodus and the migration of the Thebans that departed with Akhenaten to his new city, Akhetaten ("horizon of the Aten"). How connected were they? Was there a link between the rise of the Amarna period and the Exodus led by Moses, the disgraced Prince of Egypt?

I, like many before me, looked for the connections between Akhenaten and Moses. Was Moses the half-adopted brother of the heretic king? Was it indeed Thebes where Moses was discovered in the bulrushes that line the banks of the River Nile? Had Moses truly walked the pillared halls of Karnak and Ipet-resyt? For me, I never hesitated in dismissing Ramesses II and other pharaohs that had been attributed to the Exodus mythology; I had, for some reason that I cannot truly explain, an intense attraction toward the House of Pharaoh Amenhotep III. For me, it was as clear as glass. There were no other contenders. I read through countless articles, books, and other related research that pertained to the various theories and ideas surrounding Moses and his possible relationships with the various pharaohs, but it never really jelled. There was always a missing component that one had to insert one's faith and belief into to make it work. An ingredient that I was losing as my knowledge increased and time elapsed, and with it my research became more and more intoxicating.

Through the years, I changed my stance from being a practicing Christian, to one that, shall we say, fell into the back pews, thumbling through his book of Common Prayer looking for answers that he knew, in his heart, did not exist therein. I was lost, like a wandering sheep that had broken away from its flock. I felt alone, so I began to move away from my research, as it provided no clear path to follow; at every turn, I would find pieces of work that had, on the face of it, seemed to provide a clue or assert a plausible scenario that I could work with, understand, and build upon, only to find that

the religion has affected the final outcome—that indeed it was not free from bias, but rather bent to fit the picture. I wandered from scholar to scholar looking for new ideas and theories that had not been corrupted by the institution that they were in. Even the earlier academics with their huge monographs had been tainted by the persuasive church, their ideas and theories shining on the pages only to be extinguished by the veil of the very religion they were questioning.

I must admit, I have had various theories throughout the years that I have supported and upheld in discussions, only to walk away from them after further deliberation and inner contemplation. Again, they never truly fit the scene. Moses was becoming a thorn in my side. Would I ever have or possess the answers I was seeking? There was just not enough material evidence to support any of the theories that had crossed my table. With each and every new book I read, it was filled with the same information, the same archaeological evidence, only written in a different prose, twisted and contorted to fit with the agendas of their authors. My despair at the institutions and individuals who were feeding an insatiable thirst for truth and knowledge were in fact just regurgitating the same old material, adding a new bow and wrapping paper to it, and presenting it as a new and wonderful exploratory work. Yet they were not.

I knew that if I was to make any headway, I would have to look elsewhere for my information. I began to dig even deeper into the hot sands of Egypt. So I went back to the drawing board and began a whole new process of thinking, removing all dogmatic and conditioned emotional processes. And voilà!

As a father would I place my newborn son in the murky waters of the Nile, waters that were infested with dangers that only visited me in my nightmares, like the great crocodile God Sobek, lurking just beneath the waters waiting patiently for its next victim? Or the somewhat gentle but ferocious hippopotamus Goddess Tawaret, her crushing jaws and immense tusks that would tear and puncture any intruder in her domain? Not to mention the bathing snakes and rip currents that laid in the surreal, gentile, beautiful crystal clear waters of the Nile. No, I would not. Nor would any other respected father or mother. Anyone who knows the Nile and its lethal banks would not even begin the thought process of placing their newborn infant in such perils. So why did the Old Testament purport such a notion of stupidity in the first place?[1] Was there an element to this that had a ring of

truth but had been lost in the stars of time? I looked for other plausible answers, such as canals, ponds, and sacred lakes. Then the great lakes of Pharaoh Amenhotep III presented themselves to me like a thunderbolt from heaven.

An enclosed and somewhat safer environment, the lakes were a place of peace and quiet away from the hustle and the bustle of the river's edge, a place that I could envision approaching without fear of being the next appetizer. They were a location where princes and princesses walked hand in hand as they mused with their accompanied courtiers, dancing and frolicking along the water's edge. From the safety of the lake's embankment, obscured by the tall bull rushes that grew unhindered, I could observe my child's safe and ultimate salvation as he was plucked from the still waters.

But as all good researchers and academics are more than familiar with, establishing a solid platform from which one can develop and begin to formulate one's ideas is only the beginning of one's journey. For me, the idea of this lake being the foundation of the whole Moses mythology grew, and with it I was able to visualize all the components that were both historical and biblically based. I was for once able to connect the dots and realize the enormous potential the lake had to the overall story. It provided not only a plausible location for the beginnings of Exodus, but it eventually became its catalyst.

As the years passed, I moved away from Moses the character. He no longer captured my imagination, and he had become a secondary component to the overall story, a player upon the greater stage, but by no means the star of the show. Rightly or wrongly the lake and its twin sister to the east of Thebes brought with them a reality that surpassed the biblical myth. I was now dealing with real people, real lives; I could see and touch their legacies and I needed no faith or belief to defend what I was now seeing. It was and still is real and factual.

To be blinded by one's own ignorance is a pitfall that many have fallen into; I could see that I, too, was becoming ignorant of the very reason that I had begun this journey. I had forsaken an entire historical account because, even though it retained numerous gaping holes, it still preserved a certain amount of plausibility. I revisited my old stomping ground, I re-analyzed the characters and events that surrounded them, and to my utter surprise, I began to see real tangible correlations between the myth and the reality. They were real people! Now my journey really began. Thousands of years had passed,

the stories had grown, the tales increased, names changed, and places were replaced, and all I ever needed was lying in front of me, hidden in plain sight the whole time.

Amenhotep, son of Hapu (to be referred to as “Hapu” from this point on, unless otherwise stated), was the hereditary son of Horus, the god of healing and philosophy, the great architect, who up until only the last thousand years or so was the terminus for many a pilgrim as they sought his healing blessings. He held and still does retain all the qualities of a man that we see today only on the silver screen. He was a leader of men; he captivated and held audiences with the living gods, he spoke face to face with God as a friend would to a friend. I had found my Moses; he was everything and even more than I had dreamed of. Hapu was the answer to my prayers; he not only created his own chain of events, but in doing so, he was the link that joined *all* the dots together.

Having found him I had truly started at the beginning of an adventure that is still ongoing, and will always be unfinished, as long as archaeologists hold trowels in their hands and men question the validity of their history. There is so much we do not understand in our past; we can only surmise and interpret the information at hand, to formulate and postulate theories and ideas, for as I always say, “We were never there, and, we will never truly know or understand what happened, we can only interpret.”

As for this book, well, Scotty and I still tread those sandy paths, trying in vain to make sense of the huge amount of material that lies on the surface of Egypt. There is so much we do not take into consideration. We surround ourselves with material items and worthless information that cloud and interrupt our true thoughts. We need only to wipe away the sand and reveal beneath it a rich and colorful history that is full of joy, happiness, and wonderment. We do not need to be reminded of the rules, the regulations, and the punishments that will consume us if we disobey. We have grown up, and we know right from wrong, as did our ancestors, and they were more than aware of what was moral and immoral. But still, we cling to the words that were written so long ago. They hold within them a truth, a realization that there is possibly something far greater than ourselves. Writing this book with Scotty has been a rollercoaster of emotions, dealing with inner demons that haunt me and taunt me at every corner, yet I have emerged a wiser man. There are no absolutes; even Scotty and I do not agree on our respective theories—hence the book. At the end of the day, when the lights go out and

you are alone, if you feel a presence that brings you peace and harmony, and allows you to off load your worries and woes, then so be it. We all need that higher-self; without it, this world would probably be crazier than it already is, if that is at all possible.

—Dr. John Ward
Luxor, Egypt
April 15, 2013

O, people of Upper and Lower Egypt who
Have come upstream or downstream to
Thebes to pray to the Lord of the Gods,
Come to me,
And I shall relay your words of pray to Amun of Karnak.
And make an offering formula and a libation to Me
With what you have,
For I am the spokesman appointed by the living Horus
To hear your words of supplication[2]

—Amenhotep, son of Hapu
Karnak, 18th Dynasty Egypt

Preface
by Scott Alan Roberts

The story of Moses is very personal to me, having followed me on hound's feet since the days of my youth, resurfacing over and over again in various ways throughout my life.

When I was a mere lad of 11 years old, I wrote a report on the Pharaoh of the Exodus, roughly 200 words long. It was this little project that allowed me to meet the man who would inspire me on to archaeological and historical critical thinking, Dr. Charles Aling, who became the president of the seminary I attended a decade later, and, for the last 25 years, has been the chair of history at Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

When I was 13 years old, I created an elaborate "Moses and the Exodus" comic book, rendered in colored markers, garnering me the attention of a Christian high school to which I was given a three-year scholarship as a result. The three little insets in the following image show that artwork from my early years, as well as other renderings of Moses for other publishing projects that spilled into my adult life.

In my seminary days, while pursuing my master's, my interest in Moses and the Exodus continued when I wrote a paper on the patriarch and the educational system he would have encountered in 18th Dynasty Egypt.

A smattering of my “Moses” artwork projects starting from eighth grade to my adult years.

In that paper I also, for the first time, explored the various dating systems incorporated by academics who, throughout the years, have striven to identify and understand the historical context of the Great Exodus of the Bible. It was an exercise in an ongoing personal study for me that has been peripherally invasive throughout my entire life.

The Bible stories once held a significant place in my spiritual life, and I adhered to them by faith as being God-breathed, factual accounts, decisive cogs in the greater machinery of the religious history of my personal spiritual journey. But the gears of that old machine became worn and rusty, lacking the fine oil of fluidity and efficacy. And soon those threads seemed to stretch the boundaries of credulity as my life drifted further from the theologies and politics of my particular denominational religion.

And so I put them all—the Sunday school tales, religious legends, and liturgical mythologies—on the back burner of faith, and there they remained until I once again was driven to apply critical thinking to the stories that seemed too legendary and mythic to be the accounts of real people. I found an inextricable drawback to those things that I had spent years discrediting as

actual events and real people. I wanted to *know* more about them. So I started studying.

And all of that has culminated in the books I have been writing for the last few years: *The Rise and Fall of the Nephilim* (an attempt to find sense in the varied religious mythologies), followed up by *The Secret History of the Reptilians,* which was my way to think through the Serpent and his religious/historical context. Both books bordered on the not-so-biblical as I used them to answer the call of intrigue into alternative theologies and history.

Although I have not come completely full circle, I have found that there is so much more to what I was taught in the hallowed halls of religious academia. I still struggle with letting go the bonds of what used to be a mandated blind faith, wanting to find *substance*—which, to me, is the only way one can reach beyond dogma and denominational theology to find the Source of fact and, yes, even Truth.

I needed—and still need—to find a truth that is not simply in the eye of the beholder or an empty exercise engaged for an hour on Sunday morning, but that envelops reason and critical thinking, standing on its own merits as opposed to someone standing at a pulpit or lectern telling me it is so.

My recent expedition to Egypt with John was a necessary thing for me. I needed to get my feet in the sand, so to speak, and wrap my head around the enormity of the history, and make a pilgrimage to the places where Moses was said to have trod. I walked the temple floors he walked, and climbed the same mountain he climbed—and in some sense, came away knowing something different than I did before. I saw things Moses saw, and, in some respect, heard his voice and felt some of his presence in ways that can’t be shared between the covers of this book.

I left Egypt a very changed man.

I am convinced that Moses existed, and I am convinced that he is identifiable in the Egyptian record. And that is what I am going to share with you now.

John has a completely different view when it comes to the facts presented in this book, and without putting words into his mouth, I would say that he has, as have I, walked away with a greater understanding of this perplexing, enigmatic character so buried in biblical legend.

And in so saying, I would add that not only has the research and writing

of this book been an act of discovery, but it has also in a very elemental way given my faith the substance it had lost long ago.

—Scotty Roberts
April 30, 2013

Authors' Note

The authors are presenting in this book two distinct theories regarding the identities of Moses and the surrounding Egyptian monarchs, separated by two generations, representing about 80 to 90 years' difference in their placement within the Egyptian chronology.

John Richard Ward's theory revolves around Amenhotep, son of Hapu; all of his chapters will state "The Hapu Thread."

Scotty Roberts presents a theory that revolves around Senenmut; all of his chapters will state "The Senenmut Thread."

Introduction

Damn you and damn your people! You will soon see that resistance to my words is the same as resistance to the God whom I represent, for I am His voice and you do not heed my words. I am his presence—His very visage!—and you spit at my feet and in the face of the One True God! He is a jealous God, of wrath and judgment who brings Hell to your footstool, yet you refuse to believe and accept His words through me! Therefore, we shall bring down a wrath upon you such as has never before been seen. You, your land, your people, and your household—to the very firstborn babe your nursemaid rocks in the cradle—shall all die at the sound of my voice. Because you refuse to heed my word and the word of the Lord, your heart is turned to stone and your people will perish. Woe to you, oh, great Pharaoh, for when you look upon me from this moment forward, you will see only fire and death!

And turning on his heel, Moses, once a prince of Egypt, stormed out of the sweet incensed alabaster courts of the Pharaoh and into the dusty haze of ancient history, the scant details of his life and the enormity of his deeds recorded for posterity only in the pages of sacred scripture and religious mythology. Outside of Judeo-Christian writings, there seems to exist no extant historical documentation of the Great Exodus of Hebrew slaves he led out of Egyptian bondage, however, the event has been held in high praise as the greatest of all stories that elevate the human spirit.

Despite the wonderful message of freed slaves and the overt presentation of the power of a holy God that runs through every thread and tendril of the story of the Great Exodus, it has taken on the time-hone timbre of religious myth and cultural legend in both its scope and language. From an enslaved race and the promise of a god-sent deliverer, to burning bushes and parting waters, the stories have morphed through time from their original writing to oral tradition through rewriting and teachings down to modern motion pictures and children’s storybooks. Sifting through theological dogma and religious mythology to find the *real* story that lay beneath the surface has

been the task of a veritable myriad writers, historians, archaeologists, theologians, and story-tellers for countless centuries.

The very existence of Moses as a historical figure has been held in dubious question by academia and religious skeptics for centuries, relegating him to the realm of biblical myth and religious folk story. The Exodus has enjoyed the same sort of handling in that the historical records of the event simply do not exist, and any mention at all is generally extrapolated from ancient writings that seem to make some obscure Egyptian reference to a possible race of Semitic slaves, and even more obscure references to events that have some resemblance to possible events that may or may not resemble certain theories of the Ten Plagues and the mass exodus of people. But as you can tell by the woefully guarded language used here, none of this is conclusive, let alone accepted as solid fact.

What we are left with are ancient stories of ancient characters engaged in highly political ancient scenarios that have seemingly no evidential proof or historical correlation, backed only by stories found in ancient religious texts written from even more ancient oral traditions and tales. The resultant hazy obscurity through which one must gaze back in time has left many to simply ponder and speculate with little more than faith as the governing principle.

Walking the Path

So many souls in the past have trodden the very same paths that we, the authors, are about to traverse with you in the pages of this book. Journeying together, you will need to discard what you think you may already know as we set out into an age-old world draped in mystery, filled with ancient religions, cults, and acts of ceremonial practice that will send shivers down your spine. We'll explore megalithic edifices that were built to honor the ancient gods of Egypt, rivaling all other structures in the ancient known world, revealing a civilization far beyond anything we have learned and imagined. And yet, despite all the archaeo-anthropological research and study by academicians, its gods and its wonders still remain as much a mystery to us today as does the dark side of the moon.

With the advent of new, emerging religions in the region, the established ancient traditions eroded and the pantheons of gods were slowly assimilated and/or eradicated in the following centuries. One by one the grand temples closed their doors, forever sealing away behind them their mystery cults,

ceremonies, and esoteric secrets, allowing the sands of Egypt to reclaim and bury them from sight. This dissolution from one generation to the next, one pharaoh to another, one religious cult to the next, bore great effect on the temples and monuments, as they were defaced, restructured, razed, and rebuilt in accordance with whatever power or spirituality held supreme sway at any given time. Upon viewing the colossal statue of Ramesses II, cracked and fallen to the ground, Percy Bysshe Shelley penned the poem "Ozymandias" to pay homage to the passing of historical ages:

I met a traveler from an antique land,
Who said, Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read,
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
No thing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that Colossal Wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Judaism, one of the new religions, quickly gathered momentum as its adherents began to settle in the thriving cities that emerged along the busy trade routes. With them, they brought their historical ancestral stories that spread among the general populace of their new homes. Handed down from tribe to tribe, these Judaic tales spoke of heroic men and women who fought against the establishment and won with the divine support of their God.

Historical Efficacy

These stories were told and retold, and eventually passed down from generation to generation via oral tradition. One such traditional story was the Exodus, the epic tale of a mass migration of enslaved Hebrews, the

descendants of the family of Jacob/Israel, who were liberated and brought up out of Egypt by the miraculous intervention of the divine. It was this God who delivered his people and led them to their ancestral home, the "Promised Land," which the Hebrews were told was "flowing with milk and honey." At the front of this migrating horde, leading the Hebrews into the desert, was the enigmatic Moses, a man of Hebrew blood, once the adopted son of an Egyptian princess now turned prophet of the Lord God.

It is interesting to note that in the story of Moses, only he, the individual prophet, was imbued with special enlightenment and leadership privileges as endowed and mandated by the God he claimed to have encountered and with whom only he communicated. And from that singular position and power of personality, it was he alone who re-entered the royal courts of his former life and made demands of the sitting Pharaoh. None of this divine right was granted to the mass of Hebrews over whom Moses imposed his God-given authority, but through act of will and force of imposition, he appointed himself into leadership and either displayed the works of the divine or took advantage of natural events to further his cause.

Likewise, these emerging Judaic-Christian religions—whose foundations are said to reside in the writings of Moses—not only affected those individuals who claimed leadership on the basis of their personal experiences in receiving religious enlightenment, but also reformed and converted entire nations that followed their claims. Either by forceful conversion or willing acceptance, whole nations were being converted to the word of Judaism and Christianity throughout the centuries, molding entire generations while subjugating and assimilating pre-existing religious practice native to its peoples. In so doing, Judaic law was imposed, as well as the values, morés, and rules by which to live one's life in a devout and pious manner. Accordingly, these new religious devotees also pursued the teachings as laid out within these stories and traditions, passing the holy messages contained therein on to their descendants, as well as proselytizing other peoples around them. Some questioned the authenticity of the new religion's message, while others blindly accepted it as truth.

Without the presence and zealous leadership of a charismatic leader, or the very presence of an incarnated deity, how does one process and quantify what is or is not truth within handed-down, processed, edited, orally transmitted, rewritten, repackaged Holy Scripture? *That* is the driving force behind the entire book. Together, with our thoughts, ideas, and theories, it is

our fervent desire to reach a better understanding and clarity, resulting in the abandonment of some of the myths, legends, and half-truths surrounding the epic biblical story of the Great Exodus. It is high time we re-think and take an unfiltered approach to understanding the story's events, chronologies, dating systems, and characters from a fresher, historical point-of-view than that which is conveyed to us from the leafy pages of the Old Testament. This is not to say that we seek to be dismissive of or stand in some sort of categorical opposition to the Bible, but rather that sometimes it is necessary to pull oneself out of the religious box in order to process the details, unhindered by denominational bias and theological dogma.

We will be expressing our own theories, hypotheses, and ideas on these pages, suggesting that you take a deeper look into one of the most historically significant events in history. Set aside your reliance on what you were taught in Sunday school and synagogue, and take a fresh view of the story and its evidences. In so doing, we hope to explore together some of the preexisting notions that have been placed forward, and at the same time revisit the actual religious text laid down in the scripture, helping us evaluate the historical and archaeological evidence that has been compiled. There are subtle clues, encoded messages, and truths hidden within those chapters that make up the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) that have been and continue to be attributed to historical facts, but fall far outside the realm of verifiable history.

The Exodus and its congregation, the Hebrew slaves, while spoken of openly and matter-of-factly in the pages of scripture, remain a silent mystery within the annals of ancient Egyptian history—and we want to find out *why*. Then you, the reader, will be able to reach a conclusion based on all the material presented in these pages, and see for yourself what could be the most plausible scenario and set of circumstances that makes physical, geographical, and historical sense.

So, why another lengthy book appraising the exploits of Moses, his family, and the Children of Israel during the event and subsequent period better known to us as Exodus? What new evidence could we possibly bring to the table that might place the Exodus within the ancient Egyptian annals of history and the Chronologies of the Egyptian Kings, that the biblical story of Moses has credence within our own, recorded history? Despite the authors of this book having differing views on the dating of the Great Exodus, those views are merely separated by two kings and two generations of the same

royal house, the personalities being of lesser importance than the credibility that such an event could even have taken place anytime during that 90-year span of time.

For some reason, the writers, scribes, editors, and rewriters of the book of Exodus have omitted the names of the royal personages whose names and reigns could have lent an accurate recounting and historical placing of the events of Exodus. When Moses wrote the original text, did he cite the names of these royal individuals, or did he have some reason for leaving them out of his book? Are there events, connections, linkages, and possible intrigues that prompted Moses to exclude these details? Or was it the product of an ancient game of "telephone," where the oral retelling, generation after generation, simply muddled the names and dates to the point where the 72 scribes compiling the Septuagint could not find any modicum of coherent, cohesive Egyptian royal lineage, resulting in the complete omission of these names from the Old Testament text? Have we not traveled down all the routes of supplementing the biblical characters with those of ancient Egyptian personalities, such as Pharaoh Akhenaton, the so-called originator of monotheism during the Amarna Period of the 18th Dynasty, and the ever-popularized-yet-far-too-late-in-the-time line great Pharaoh Ramesses II, due mostly to the (extrapolated) inclusion of his cities within the book of Exodus 1:11? Is there anyone left to logically supplement? "Why supplement at all?" some would ask. Why not simply take the biblical narrative as the verbatim chronicle of events as they happened? After all, would not the Lord God be able to sustain the efficacious and accurate accounting of these events in His Holy Writ?

It is not our intention to sift through the veritable mountain range of existing research material, only to present it in a new light or some new angle to fit with our own suggestions or theories. But herein lies the problem: *Which historical reference material do we present?*

Furthermore, it is not the content of the Bible that we are bringing into question. Oh, *contraire!* The biblical account is what it is and it stands intact as a piece of history all on its own. The argument that the Bible cannot contain any accurate historical data on the sole basis that it is a book of compiled books of faith is nonsensical. One would be hard-pressed to find any ancient culture that separated its books of faith from its books of history. Look at historical cases such as the Salem Witch Trials in which government worked inseparably with religion. For good or ill, accurate history has been

recorded in conjunction with issues of faith all through time. And when it comes to the Exodus, no matter what scholarship may be brought to an examination of the writing, editing, and scribal involvement through the centuries, the historicity of the biblical text has many times been found to be reliable, albeit obscured. What we *do* bring is the characters that pertain to the Exodus and the events that surround the Hebrews' flight from Egypt.

As stated previously in the Introduction, what we wish to convey is that there are at least two conflicting ideas, both supported by historical facts and archaeological material, which could suggest two plausible alternative scenarios based around the story of Exodus. One of those theories relies heavily on dating systems and events found in several biblical narratives, whereas the other relies more heavily on archaeological data that suggests the events of the biblical Exodus were indeed recorded in Egyptian history. In essence, aligning the biblical characters with historical personalities who retain similar traits and who have partaken in exploits and events that could otherwise be mistaken with aspects of the Exodus story line. Then bring into the mix a few yet-unknown theories that pertain to a series of natural disasters that had a dramatic effect upon the ancient Egyptian kingdom and its people. These events could be seen as comparable to the infamous Ten Plagues of Egypt inflicted upon Pharaoh, his servants, and the population of the vicinity of Thebes by Moses and his brother Aaron, perhaps with the divine help of God, as mentioned in the biblical narrative in Exodus 7–12.

For many, it is the devastating scenes of carnage, death, and destruction across Egypt that draws them to the story of Exodus. It is the bloodied waters that drove the Egyptians to thirst for seven long, grueling days; the pestilence, sickness, fire, and death in every household, including the firstborn son of the Pharaoh. It is these images that cause us to ponder why Egyptian history makes no mention of such disasters—*or does it?*

Later, we will discuss the possibility that Lake Malkata, built by Pharaoh Amenhotep III, burst its protective levies during the Nile flood season and it was this natural disaster that gave rise to the apocalyptic migration out of Thebes, eventually resulting in the relocation of the Egyptian capital and the construction of Amarna by Akhenaton, son of Amenhotep III. Many of us remember the death and destruction that were inflicted upon the people of Japan during the earthquake and tsunami of 2011. Similar in its severity, the waters of the great lake would have destroyed everything in its path, the flimsy and poorly constructed mud brick abodes washed away in the torrents,

leaving nothing in its wake. The sheer number of dead, both man and beast, would have been in their thousands, while those who survived were left with nothing more than a death sentence, as all the food supplies ran out and shelter from the scorching rays of the Egyptian sun would have baked the fresh mud hard, bringing disease and pestilence to those around the rotting corpses embedded in the mud. The flies and sheer smell of decomposing flesh would have had dramatic effects upon those who survived, giving rise to nothing more than an apocalyptic exodus out of Thebes in search for food and shelter. Meanwhile, the royal palace above the lake would have been completely untouched by the disaster.

We will also examine the *character* approach to uncovering these events of the Exodus, in which one could utilize certain keystone dates mentioned in Old Testament scripture linked to the later construction of Solomon's Temple (Temple 1) in Jerusalem in 966 BC alongside elements of the biblical narrative combined with both Judaic and Christian traditional stories placing the event under the reign of Amenhotep II, two generations before the disastrous catastrophe of the destruction of Lake Malkata. Could Moses have correlated with the Egyptian official Senenmut, favored man to Queen Hatshepsut? Is there evidence that Hatshepsut was *the* "Pharaoh's Daughter" who drew Moses from the Nile after his Hebrew slave mother hid him from the terrible edict of Pharaoh Thutmoses I, who decreed (according to the biblical account) that all Hebrew male children under the age of 3 be cast into the river and drown? Mothers, sons, lovers, queens, kings, princes, deeply set hatred, consequence, and unquenchable intrigue surround the characters of Thutmoses I, Thutmoses II, Thutmoses III, and Hatshepsut's royal courts, creating unparalleled character association to the story of Moses as presented in the book of Exodus.

Transporting Our Minds

What most authors neglect to emulate within their works are the true atmosphere of the period and linkages between the historical characters and their place in the environment in which the Exodus was supposedly taking place. When reading the biblical narrative, we forget to ask ourselves what it was truly like to walk from ancient Thebes to the Red Sea across the eastern deserts. What was the route like and how many roadside diners and lavatory rest stops did they find along the way? How long would it have taken Moses

to walk, post murderous encounter, from the capital of Thebes to the region of Midian as recorded in Exodus 2:15, where he met his future wife, Tzipporah, and father-in-law, Jethro, the high priest of Midian? Which ancient temples was Moses inspecting when he witnessed the Hebrew slave worker being beaten by his Egyptian task master? Were the Nile River and its banks and canals safe enough to feed people and be used as a transportation network throughout the Theban necropolis? Where was the royal court of the Pharaoh, and how did Moses and Aaron know of its existence some 40 years after Moses fled to Midian? Were they guided, or did Moses have a clear understanding of the Egyptian government from a former insider's point-of-view?

Who was Aaron, Moses' *older* brother, mentioned as being 3 years old when Moses was born, and what had he been doing for the 80 years (Exodus 7:7) that Moses spent between his adoption into the royal family of Egypt around age 5 to 7, and his flight from the courts of Egypt at age 40 and subsequently 40 more years in Midian? Had brother Aaron received an upbringing accustomed to the Hebrew customaries of his slave parents? Or was Aaron an Egyptian, having received an education as a Priest within the great stone walls of Karnak or Memphis, worshipping the sacred Apis Bull, foundational to his new position as the High Priest of Israel after the Exodus? Was this where he learned his skills as the great oratory he was acclaimed to be by God in Exodus 4:14? And what of their sister, Miriam, the one who sang the song of Moses in Exodus 15:20, after the Children of Israel were led safely to the eastern shores as the Red Sea was parted for them? What happened later when she was punished by God and she became leprous for seven days, according to Numbers 12:10? What if these three pivotal characters were not Hebrew by birth, but pure Egyptian, later substituted by the 72 Judaic scholars to be better suited to the needs and requirements of the religion they were asked to transcribe? Is there any evidence to conclude that when Moses was adopted by the royal woman whom the biblical text refers to only as "Pharaoh's Daughter" (Exodus 2:5) that she, too, enriched his siblings? And is it at all interesting to note that all three of these siblings—Moses, Aaron, and Miriam—were all prohibited by God from entering the Promised Land that lay at the end of their Exodus wanderings, each dying before reaching their destination.

Addressing these questions that arise from taking an analytical approach to the later versions of the Old Testament is a minefield that opens one to

criticism and debate. If you take the position that the Bible is completely unerring in its historical accuracy, you end up standing in the same critical light as one who says that there must be more to what meets the eye in the biblical record. We cannot overlook the circumstances or the conditions of life during that period of time in which the ancient versions of the Old Testament were written. Ancient Alexandria, Egypt, would have had a considerable bearing on the 72 Judaic scholars that re-compiled the books of Moses—including Exodus—from oral traditional stories. It would be unwise and foolish to think that their contemporary situations did not have an impact upon their styles of writing and narrative, not to mention their interpretations and traditions that would have had a great bearing on their overall technique and style. To accept that the pages of Old Testament scripture reconstructed from the oral traditions of the Jewish faithful would be accurate to the point of not altering one jot or tittle from the original text, requires an enormous leap of faith on the part of adherents to Judaic-Christian theology.

The Recompilation of a Faith Story and a History for Israel

Those 72 scholars who sat in their individual chambers in the Museion Library of Alexandria at the request of Pharaoh Ptolemy Philadelphus II and Queen Arsinoe, had a task set in front of them that would have a dramatic impact upon humanity for thousands of years. It has always been an historical fact that the victors write the history books, leaving the defeated and less fortunate to lick their wounds, so why would the events that surround the Exodus be any different? That event was an enormous defeat for the sitting Pharaoh at the time it took place, and was most certainly a phenomenal blow to the belief system and pantheon of Egyptians gods.

However, this leaves us with a dilemma. No matter how we wish to look at the Exodus or entertain any other suggestion other than that which is written, there still remains the obtusely overt fact that we possess no actual proof that the events detailed upon those Old Testament pages ever, really, truly took place. For some, it is faith alone that supports the story. For others it is a blind belief that the word of God is written and divinely maintained through the 72 Judaic scholars of Alexandria, and therefore cannot be called into question.

Let us pose this question, which primarily comes from John, but seems wholly relevant at this juncture: If, indeed, the all-powerful God of the

Hebrews had inflicted so much damage and carnage upon their ancient ancestors in Thebes, why did they continue to worship their own gods, who failed to save the ancient Egyptians from such chaos? Surely there must have been mistrust that would have been bestowed upon the Hebrews after such an extreme and exaggerated migration out of Egypt, not to mention the slaughter of thousands left in their wake as they sojourned across the wilderness for the following 40 years it took to claim their Promised Land.

Standing Before the Pharaoh

Have you ever wondered why Moses and Aaron were allowed to continue their oratory with the Pharaoh of Egypt, even after bringing chaos and destruction upon the land and its people? Why did Pharaoh not have them imprisoned, or at worst have them executed for sedition, inciting violence and bringing about the general strike as detailed in Exodus 5:4?

Each time a new plague would strike at the very heart of the Egyptian empire, both Moses and Aaron would walk, apparently unrestricted, up to the Pharaoh without any recorded hindrance. Further, they would freely continue their discourse with Pharaoh as if they were well accustomed to one another's company, even though Egypt was in chaos. And this was all happening despite the fact that both Moses and Aaron repeatedly advertised that it was they who brought and inflicted the calamities in Egypt.

Some would say that this was divine intervention; we read that the Lord God of the Children of Israel hardened the heart of Pharaoh after each successive plague, and that it was this very same divine influence that allowed them to continue with their requests for the freedom of the enslaved Hebrew nation. And this was all carried out without so much as a harsh word from Pharaoh. Now, if Moses and Aaron were looked at as foreign ambassadors stating grievances and rattling chains of war against Egypt, they might have held some ancient form of diplomatic immunity, but these men were part of a slave race. Or perhaps what we need to ask is: Were the Hebrews an integrated people and the only slavery was the slavery of metaphor? Was Moses preaching a gospel of forgotten heritage and a liberation from the bonds of nationalistic enslavement in Egypt?

We will address these important issues by exploring the various alternative historical personalities of the times, which may have had the freedom of the royal court, either as courtiers or high viziers to the Pharaoh.

It would have been this very freedom and familiarity that granted them an audience, and in turn allowed them to reiterate their demands in a tone that would have otherwise been deadly to any outsider. Were Moses a Prince of Egypt who had been groomed to one day sit on the throne, the animosity from that rightful heir would have been extreme. And it would also explain why he was so reluctant to return and make demands of the seated Pharaoh some 40 years later. Moses, the Prince of Egypt turned Fugitive of Egyptian Politic.

Engage Your Critical Thinking

Not only during this discourse with you, our readers, is it our desire to present a series of alternatives, but at the same time bring into the question the authenticity of the original Septuagint, which many of the Old Testaments revisions are based upon, showing clear irregularities in their writing styles, narrative, and the historical inaccuracy of their interpretation of events. Again, these are only alternatives and suggestions. To suggest or consider that there be no possible issue with translation, interpretation, transmission of oral information, or corruption of details will have to remain a thing that can stand only on the merits of faith in a god who is able to perform in such a way. Doubting causes us to question, and without asking the questions, we may find that we believed something that may have all along been inaccurate. The late astral physicist, Richard Fyneman, contemporary to Einstein and Oppenheimer, once said of his belief in God: “To question and doubt is a fundamental part of who I am…I’d prefer to die not knowing something, rather than live my entire life believing something was so, only to find out later that it wasn’t true.”

Outlining the various alternatives within the book of Exodus will hopefully provide us with an opportunity to survey the parameters of organizing and bringing together the Hebrew nation in readiness for their Exodus, and how this was facilitated or organized to a greater extent.

John Ward, having explored extensively the western and eastern deserts of Egypt, is more than familiar with the sorts of preparations required to plan expeditions into the wild deserts of Egypt and the Sinai. The planning and preparation that would be required to facilitate the mobilization and transportation of what the biblical account in Exodus 12:37 states was “600,000 men on foot” (and their wives, children, elderly, livestock, and

meager possessions; see Exodus 10:9) would be a monumental task of… wait for it… *biblical proportions.* It is here that certain physical flaws begin to emerge in the story line of the Old Testament. There have been various suggestions as to the time allotted to the planning of the Exodus and how long it took for the mass migration to take place. Was it over days, weeks, months, or even a year? The Old Testament tells us of the plundering of Egypt as prophesized in Genesis 15:14, yet it reads as if this all took place *overnight,* and furthermore, there is no mention of communications among cities or villages. For that matter, the enslaved Hebrew nation continued their labors unabated by the plagues or inflictions laid upon them by their task masters and daily quotas. As a matter of fact, the biblical account tells us that there was such a division of plague suffering that, during the Plague of Darkness (as recorded in Exodus 10:22–23), the Egyptians were engulfed in a blackness so deep that they could not move from their houses for three days, while the Hebrews enjoyed the sunshine.

Such a mass migration of people would have necessitated some kind of planning or an ample supply of provisions to be taken with them. Yet we are told in Exodus 12:34 that the Hebrews took their unleavened bread and mixing bowls wrapped in cloth on their shoulders. The entire affair becomes one that was driven by the hand of the divine in order for it to transpire, as we are told in the pages of scripture. We are not saying that this is not what happened, but we are driven to look at the mathematics and the logistics of pulling off such a major undertaking, and the alternatives we will present to you in these pages do suggest a more hurried and expedited migration, thus again falling in line with the biblical version, while also providing a backdrop to the entire Exodus scenario.

Both of the authors have traveled the eastern deserts of Egypt following in the same footsteps as those migrating eastward from the capital of Thebes, treading the same pathways the Hebrews once did in their sandals (if they possessed such luxurious items). We envisioned what it was like to be in the clustered line of people walking along the trade routes, the desert sun beating down them. With their livestock in tow, they carried their chattels upon their backs while stumbling over the rough, stony terrain, not to mention seeing those who may have perished along the wayside, stripped of their clothes and possessions, and left bare and baking upon the desert floor. Even harsher still, would be the families following their cultural/familial Hebraic traditions of carrying their dead with them to the Promised Land.

Night after night, they ate the meager rations that they carried with them, building fires to keep them warm in the coldness of the desert night. These images of despair and hopelessness are not recanted among the pages of the Old Testament; in fact, it all happens so quickly that we do not pause to think what it must have been like for them. The happiness and rejoicing of emancipation from their bondage under the hard fist of the Pharaoh must soon have been replaced by the grieving of the hungry and cracked rasping of the thirsty. The biblical account in Exodus 14:11–12 gives us some hint of their condition. In a matter of days, the people were complaining to Moses about how they'd prefer to die in their slave homes back in Egypt rather than in the harshness of the desert wilderness in which they now found themselves.

> And they said unto Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians.'" For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

To picture a thousand campfires lighting up the night sky in one of the many rocky desert valleys conjures emotions that one would not otherwise feel while reading the scripture. Were they afraid of what might lay ahead for them, or were they simply content with just being free? And if they had been slaves for the entirety of their lives, were they terrified at the prospect of what existed along the journey? Again we turn to the question of familiarity between the Children of Israel and Moses and Aaron. Where and how did the trust and bond between the now-released Hebrew Children of Israel and Moses come from? One of the questions that remain unanswered is: How many of the participants in Exodus were *actually Hebrew*? We can agree that they were Hebrew by birth, but Egyptian by culture and upbringing. Was Moses seen as a prince of the Egyptian royal family, having turned his back on his adopted mother and family to free the Hebrew slaves, or was he leading his own people?

There were so many people dragging their few possessions through the harsh desert conditions, following a man that they believed would free them and provide them with the Promised Land. They must have been aware of the terrifying consequences that befell their Pharaoh at the hands of Moses and Aaron. Was it this fear of the Lord God that drove them and motivated them? Or was it their freedom in the desert that gave them strength?

Put Yourself Into the Context

We enter realms of imagination here, and our minds race with images of the massive corridor of water, opened, as the scripture says, “as a wall on the left and a wall on the right.” Exposed coral reefs and sandy plains spanned the pathway from one shore to the other. Few ever question the nearly impossible task it would have presented to walk along the exposed wet sea bed, not to mention the uneven terrain it must have presented to them.

Make no mistake: The accounts of the Ten Plagues, the Exodus, and the life of Moses were written mostly for the purposes of stirring our hearts and causing shock and awe to our emotions. But that is not to say that the stories are fraudulent, fake, or without historical efficacy. As seems to be the case in antiquity, the more fantastical the tale spun around the basics of a historical event, the easier it is to gain believers. The story of Moses and the Exodus has all the classical trappings of an amazing legend rife with mythological happenings. And, frankly, we would love nothing more than to sit back and say we have discovered that every word in the Holy Scriptures is true. What an amazing story that would be! But we know in our hearts that there is something more—or less—to the stories as we have heard them through the years. We do not question the logistics of such an epic feat; we merely read on with anticipation, the defeat of Pharaoh and his army still whets our appetite for glory.

Is it the human emotional response to the story of Exodus that has kept it so vigorously alive? Is it the classic struggle of good versus the perceived evil, and the cry for freedom that has stirred the hearts and minds of religious and non-religious believers alike? Even with the advent of film and television, the epic story of the Exodus has been presented to us on the silver screen, again bringing to life the various aspects of the tale while presenting plausible scenarios in which one finds, all at once, familiarity that carries us through the unbelievable. No matter how fantastically legendary the story may be, it is *believable.* With help from all the period costumes and special effects, we are drawn into a world that we could not imagine without reference. In a very real sense, the story of the Exodus, as written down from the oral traditions, became the *Lord of the Rings* of its day, combining believable people—and in the case of Exodus, real historical characters—with fantastical situations, filled with a brand of myth and magic that leads to a great triumph over the forces of evil. Only in the case of the Exodus, the

God of the Universe, who is meant to be shown as a real, living force in our lives, was the divinely guiding force. These images now provide the visual reference that millions can draw upon providing the necessary tools to build a perfect mental picture—a scenario in which the biblical narrative can now take place and become absolutely plausible in the mind's eye.

"This Shall Be Our God!"

Before we leave the Introduction, we want to take you on one more excursion into the tale of Exodus: the Golden Calf and the Holy Mountain of God. It was here upon this mountain of fire that Moses retreats for 40 days to commune with God and receive the first chiseled stone tablets bearing the commandments. It is here that Aaron procures from the Children of Israel their pillaged Egyptian gold, from which he fashions a Golden Calf to represent their god who led them out of bondage, and to which they can give worship in the absence of Moses. It is this singular event that reminds us just how Egyptian these Hebrews truly are. After all the works and wonders of the Lord God they had seen displayed, from the plagues to the parting of the Red Sea, they still create a false idol to worship a mere two weeks into the Sinai desert. The Golden Calf scenario brings us to question the foundation and upbringing of the Moses family. Were they indeed Hebrew or were they Egyptian? The question of blood heritage versus national identity will be asked many times over, especially when dealing with the incorporation of implements of worship, such as the infamous Ark of the Covenant and its attributed chattels.

Together we will explore the ancient Temple of Serabit el Khadim, located in the southeastern deserts of the Sinai Peninsula, close to the shores of the Red Sea, near what is now known as the mouth of the Suez Canal. This Temple complex has a rich history reaching far back into the epochs of Egyptian history. Primarily, this was a place of worship for the Goddess Hathor, the cow goddess of fertility and growth. Is it synchronistic that this temple is located in the very spot where the trade routes of the Sinai converge? Would it be inconceivable to suggest that these ancient Egyptian trade routes would have existed at the time of the Exodus, and would it be presumptuous to suggest that the Golden Calf that Aaron fashions be one and the same as Hathor, and that the released Hebrew slaves who were by defacto *Egyptian* in their culture and upbringing, were of course more than familiar

with the traditions and ceremonial customs of Hathor? Could this be the reason why Aaron allowed this religious transgression to take place?

While rewriting the Old Testament, the 72 Judaic scholars of the Ptolemaic period saw an opportunity to demonstrate that the Lord God was indeed a jealous God, and that the worship of any other God or Deity was considered a sin, and therefore punishable by death. When Moses returned from the mountain, carrying with him the first tablets of the law, he threw them to the ground in a fit of righteous anger at the reckless regression of the Children of Israel. Moses then took the Golden Calf and burned it in the fire until it was consumed, grinding its charred remains and scattering it upon the water supplies (according to Exodus 32:16–21), ordering the errant Hebrews to drink that same water. It is within the same chapter that 3,000 Hebrews were slain and the remaining Hebrews who sinned against the Lord God would be plagued on the day of punishment by the Lord God, akin to a sacrifice to atone for the sins of the people, all at the site of the Temple of Hathor in western Sinai.

The End of the Beginning

Normally within an introduction, one sets out the reasons for the forthcoming chapters and lays out the theories, ideas, and thought processes behind the authors, ending with a conclusion. The conclusion of our introduction is simple, and yet conflicting at the same time, as we did not set out on this journey free of worries or trepidation; it was not an easy decision to make. On the one hand both Scotty and John are Christian in their upbringing, both having the Bible taught to them from an early age. Scotty entered Bible college and theological seminary, while John works and lives on the very site of the ancient city of Thebes where Moses walked and from which the Exodus burst into history. So both of us have entered this hall of questions with a pre-conditioned thought process and a preconditioned set of parameters with which we had to come to terms in order to outline our ideas and thoughts as presented here. And we had to do this all without taking a definitive point of view, standing in a sort of biblical neutral zone that will most probably bear its own weight of critical response.

It is our hope that our theories, hypothesis, notions, and suggestions will help you come to a better understanding of the narrative employed in the Bible, thereby allowing you to travel alongside those ancient people who

sought freedom, salvation, and a place they could call home. After all is said and done, we all desire a place that we can call home, where we can raise our children in peace and safety, grow old, and watch our children marry and raise their own children, perpetuating the never-ending cycle of humankind.

Now it is time to enter the following chapters with a clear and open mind, understanding that sometimes the things we deem as truth may sometimes be only the glorified stuffs of myth and legend. On the other hand, many of the things we may have considered to be too fantastical to accept as fact or truth may just be the at the core of what is the most relevant and real parts of the story.

The Mission Set Forth

It is our contention that the Exodus, in all its reality, is more than mere religious mythology or exaggerated happenstances blown into epic proportions. It is the tale, based on a true story, of the apocalyptic migration of an integrated people that followed on the heels of catastrophic events. And, now, let us take you on a journey into the past and show you how it really happened….

CHAPTER ONE

An Anthro-Archaeological Perspective

Tip your head back, close your eyes, and breathe deep the air around you. It is filled with the aromas of your life and environment—sometimes the things we take in so subconsciously—such as the scent of our homes, the leather upholstery in our automobiles, the oven in the kitchen, the soapy smell of the clothes dryer exhaust, and the scent of hewn grass wafting in through open summertime windows blending with the sound of passing garbage trucks, sirens, and children playing in the backyard. Now, imagine your senses being transported to another time and another place, where the air is arid and dry and hot, with only the faintest hint of moisture filling your nostrils as the massive Nile waters roll slowly by, evaporating into the air around you. The scent of water, fish, and papyrus reeds bending in the mild breeze from their place in the marshy patches leading up to the river's edge fill your nostrils with the sweet, pungent odor of green. In the distance, carrying on the ever-so-faintly incensed air blending into the warm dustiness are the low, melancholic, minor-keyed melodies of the priestly chants, mixed with the sound of the bustling city life echoing off the stone structures. Cheers and joyous shouting are raised into the mix as the Pharaoh rides his chariot along the processional way, throngs of people crowded along the route, in, around, and atop the sphinxes lining the avenue. The smell of kitchen fires, baking bread, and boiling stews of oxen mix with the smells of roasting geese, leeks, garlic, and onion. A cacophony of sensuality greets you. And when you open your eyes to that first, blinding white of the desert sun, the city is bathed in bright light, glistening above the sparkling waters of the river Nile….

Any good story relies not only on its characters, but also on the setting in which they are placed. Likewise, qualitative study on any topic from antiquity needs a good reference point; a stage on which to block the characters who move in and throughout the play. Establishing the life and

deeds of such enigmatic figures as Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, and their more-than-probable connection to the royal houses of 18th Dynasty Egypt is possible only by taking an acute, intrinsic look at the stage whereon they acted out their destinies. It is our intention to establish not only the circumstantial evidence that links these biblical protagonists and antagonists to real history, but to remove their Sunday school pageant bathrobe and bedsheet costumes, raising them out of relegated storybook myth and legend to stand openly and unabashedly on the stage of human history within the walls of the temples and palaces of ancient Egypt.

So, before we can even begin exploring the various evidences, ideas, suggestions, and theories that we wish to present, we felt it appropriate to pull back the heavy velvet curtain, walk you to center stage, and begin taping off the players' marks on the stage floor. As the backdrop unfurls behind you and the flats of history roll into place on stage left and right, use your imagination and let us transport you from whatever chair, sofa, bed, or bench you now find yourself on to the banks of the sun-sparkled waters of the River Nile and one of 18th Dynasty Egypt's ancient capitals, Thebes, the bustling, magnificent river city of the pharaohs, where the Temple of Luxor was referred to in ancient times as *Ipet-resyt*, the "Southern Sanctuary."

Located in middle Egypt, some 400 miles south of modern-day Cairo and 118 miles north of Aswan, sandwiched between the western and the eastern deserts with the Theban mountain range hovering over the western boundary, Thebes embraces the many secrets and epic legends that it has witnessed over the centuries.

The city of Luxor (ancient Thebes), as it appears today, rising around the ancient Temple of Luxor.

Although the city of Thebes was home to the Egyptian monarchy in the New Kingdom, it is difficult to understand how Moses interacted and traveled between the Pharaoh in Thebes and the Hebrews in Goshen, in the northern Nile Delta. According to Genesis 49:9–10, when Joseph, the son of Jacob, was made vizier in Egypt some 400 years prior to the events of the Great Exodus, he relocated his Canaanite family to the Land of Goshen, which has been placed in the delta region of the Nile, to the east of present-day Cairo, in the fertile, marshy expanse of the Wadi Tumilat. And there, throughout the next four centuries, the family of Jacob—about 70 people—grew into the vast number of Hebrews, eventually enslaved by the Pharaoh, who, according to Exodus 1:8, "had no regard for Joseph."

The big question is: If the Pharaoh and his family primarily lived in Thebes, how could he interact with the representatives of the Hebrews who were living and working 400 miles to the north in Goshen? He could if there is some historical credence to the idea that the royal family moved back and forth between Thebes, the capital, and Memphis, the religious center. Its logistical proximity to Goshen would certainly open the door for two glaring points in the biblical story: 1) The mention that Moses' birth mother, Jochabed, sent him down the Nile in a basket, eventually ending up in the pools of the royal palace, could not have happened at the palace in Thebes, if, theoretically, the Hebrews were living 400 miles north in Goshen. Distance notwithstanding, keep in mind that the Nile River flows *north,* toward the

Mediterranean Sea, not south toward Thebes/Luxor. The city of Memphis, however, stood in the region just west of Goshen and north of present-day Cairo, and was filled with Nile River canals intersecting all over the place, so the Hebrews were just down the canal, and 2) 80 years later, when Moses and Aaron confronted the Pharaoh demanding the release of the Hebrew slaves, the monarch is said to have angered at their insolence and issued an edict that the Hebrews would have to go find their own straw for their brick-making. This would have been unlikely were he at the royal palace in Thebes while the Hebrews' brick-making operation was in Goshen, 400 miles to the north. Without the convenience of video conferencing or Moses possessing an iPhone, the Pharaoh would need to be in some close proximity to the slaves' base of operations. So, the plot thickens. Thebes or Memphis? We'll examine this in much deeper detail later in these pages.

The Pharaonic Seat of Egypt

Thebes was a city of ancient splendor; a beautiful, artistic center that was the jewel of Egyptian royalty and spirituality, whose east bank was the celebration of light, life, and living mortals, while its west bank was an equal celebration of death, eternity, and the immortals. Nowhere does there seem to be a settlement of common slaves near this immaculate city. Thebes was set in a spiritually charged landscape, and the question of communication between Moses, Pharaoh, and the Hebrews is brought to bear by simple logistics on a map of ancient Egypt, and the absence of a major slave population's expansive settlement in this cultural heart of the kingdom.

> 1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, LET MY PEOPLE GO, THAT THEY MAY HOLD A FEAST UNTO ME IN THE WILDERNESS. 2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, THAT I SHOULD OBEY HIS VOICE TO LET ISRAEL GO? I KNOW NOT THE LORD, NEITHER WILL I LET ISRAEL GO. 3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD OUR GOD; LEST HE FALL UPON US WITH PESTILENCE, OR WITH THE SWORD. 4 And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. 5 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land ***now are many***, and ye make them rest from their burdens. 6 And Pharaoh commanded ***the same day*** the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, 7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. 9 Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour

> therein; and let them not regard vain words. 10 And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. 11 Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. 12 So the people ***were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt*** to gather stubble instead of straw.
>
> —Exodus 5:1–12 **(*Authors' emphasis*)**

Was it from the palace at Thebes that Pharaoh Thutmoses I, Amenhotep II, or even Amenhotep III issued angry edicts for the Hebrew babies to be killed or their tally of bricks to be increased and their labors to be harshened by the gathering of their own straw? Or was there a connection to the northern city of Memphis, which lay in close proximity to Goshen? The necessity of these questions weighs heavily on the substance of a latter part of this book, where we examine the physical logistics of a biblically recorded mass migrational exodus of what would had to have been, by the biblical accounting, nearly one-and-a-half million slaves. Overnight.

Perhaps Thebes, being the political, cultural, and spiritual capital of Egypt gave accommodation, diplomatic immunity, and possibly even some sort of governmental housing to the new faces of the Hebrew slave population, Moses and Aaron, as well as the Hebrew "taskmasters" and "officers," but at this point in these pages, there is a need to engage in less speculation and more digging into the historical efficacy of both places.

Today, the city of Thebes goes by the name of Luxor or Louksour, as the French named it during their occupation, separated by the River Nile as it winds its way northward toward the Mediterranean. The east bank is home to the main city with hotels, restaurants, and other touristic trappings, what one would expect of such a historic center that has catered to numerous visitors throughout the past 2,000 years, but more importantly it is home to Karnak (Ipet-isut), known as the world's largest open-air museum. Hidden behind its crumbling walls, there are ancient secrets and ceremonial practices that glorified the divine Theban triad only known to the High Priests that walked its glorious halls and who bathed in the coolness of the sacred lake that lies within its heart. It is connected by a Sphinx-lined avenue that was once trodden by the feet of the pharaohs of ancient Egypt. Today, this processional route lies in a sad state of ruin, but still manages to inspire and awaken those emotions of grandeur and pompous ceremony that it once enjoyed. The avenue terminates at the Temple of Luxor (Ipet-resyt), a truly magnificent structure built by various pharaohs that eventually succumbed to the Roman

occupation. It once housed a beautiful basilica, which now holds the Mosque of Abu Haggag, allowing this sacred location to continue as a place of worship and pilgrimage.

The Gate of Luxor Temple as it appears today.

Both of the temples would have figured heavily into the Exodus story line yet are remiss from the biblical narrative. It is not inconceivable to suggest or imagine that in the formative years of Moses' youth he would have walked upon the very stone slabs that so many tourists tread today. The view would not have been that dis-similar within the confines of the pillared halls with the constant sound of wooden hammers against metal while water boys dealt refreshing Nile water to the stone masons as they carefully and gently carved the scenes of the Opet Festival. But at the same time Moses would have enjoyed the company of its incumbent priests with their freshly shaven heads and their flowing white robes, listening intently to their words of wisdom and knowledge as they recited the sacred stories of the Gods to him, and in doing so, preparing Moses for his royal duties that one day he would have to perform.

The West Bank is home to the ancient Theban Necropolis, Land of the Dead, where they rest peacefully within their tombs, emblazoned with sacred texts from the Book of the Dead, while their *ka* travel freely among the living, visiting their earthly homes and loved ones they left behind, eating and drinking as if life was an eternal pleasure. It is here we find the infamous

Valley of the Kings and the sprawling stone mortuary temples of various pharaohs that line the western desert's edge, now preserved piles of stone, resembling a mere fraction of their original grandeur. The lonely doorways now provide access to empty spaces, but once were beautifully decorated chambers adorned by hand-crafted furniture and colorful fabrics. If one could pause for a moment, it is easy to imagine the sweet smell of burning incense as it passed from chamber to chamber, filling the voids with the aromatic odors of the east, their gentle smoke being highlighted by the shards of penetrating light that break through the small carved windows.

One such temple is the magnificent mortuary temple of Djeser Djeseru in Deir el Bahri, built by Hatshepsut under the hand of appointed chief architect Senenmut. The never-ending cycle of temple life included delivery after delivery making its way through huge sycamore doors with heavy bronze hinges, encrusted with green oxidization. Massive lion-headed bolts were drawn back to allow in the stream of men and their donkey-driven carts carrying the necessary supplies of grain, fruits, and precious oils. Behind them were the livestock, many of which would be required for the daily offerings within the ceremonial rites and rituals that were performed for the deities and the deceased owner of the temple complex.

Hatshepsut's temple of Djeser Djeseru, built by her Grand Vizier and Royal Architect, Senenmut.

The cottage industry that produced all that was required for the easy running of the temple was constantly busy. The kitchens were always preparing and serving meals to those who had spent the morning laboring in

the fields or to the priests who had just finished their first set of daily rituals. But these were nowhere near as tremendous as the feast that was being laid out before the visiting god on his offering table, later to be shared among the temple staff and their families once the deity had satisfied its hunger.

The weavers and their apprentices spun yard after yard of fine cloth and linen in preparation of the ongoing mummification process that took place regularly; the embalming workshops requirement for their supply of sacred linen never abated. It's not a huge leap to place Moses, Aaron, and Miriam into such a scene.

It is worth mentioning that the name of these temples translates as "House of Millions of Years"; it was the belief of their architects that the dead Pharaoh would travel back and forth from the Underworld to visit his earthly house—hence the name.

As we previously mentioned within the Introduction, ancient Egypt is as familiar as the dark side of the moon, and rightly so in many aspects. Archaeologically speaking there is an immense wealth of material pertaining to ancient Egypt and its people. Universities, libraries, and museums across the world have amassed huge collections of Egyptian artifacts that span thousands of years, not to mention the Grand Egyptian Museum. In pop-culture terms, other than the famous tomb of Tutankhamun, the Sphinx, and the Pyramids, not much is really well-known or talked about. The silver screen has portrayed ancient Egypt in many guises, from the mid-20th-century old black and white films of Boris Karloff as *The Mummy* to the action-packed adventures of Indiana Jones and his conquests across the world of antiquity. And let's not forget the recent adventures of *The Mummy* trilogy, in which we see significantly important ancient names such as "Imhotep" come to life in front of us, performing rites and ceremonies that quite possibly bear some resemblance to the ancient events.

Ever since the first early European travelers began to navigate the Nile, tales of Egypt's rich history began to filter their way back to mainland Europe, conjuring images related to the age-old stories such as *Arabian Nights, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves,* and of course the biblical narrative. Napoleon's somewhat forced occupation of Egypt during the later parts of the 18th century led to the great scientific exploration of ancient Egypt's history. His team of scholars, draughtsman, and engineers scoured the Egyptian countryside, recording and documenting all that lay in their paths. We have so much to thank Napoleon and his scientific team for; if they had not been

so disciplined in their work, we would not know as much as we do today. It was his team's discovery of the famous Rosetta Stone that eventually led to the decipherment of the ancient and lost hieroglyphic language by Jean-Francois Champollion in 1822, showing the academic world that the ancient text was a mixture of phonetic and ideographic signs.

As Egypt's population grew, so did its cultivation of land and the subsequent reclamation of its ancient sites to make way for the necessary housing and industry that was growing within her. Many of Egypt's glorious sites were being lost to the internal growth that flourished with its fame on the international stage. Egypt had always played a strategic part in colonial military maneuvers, but once more it was her history that brought with it European wealth and a necessity to renew its aging and somewhat-dilapidated cities.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries the great discoveries began to make headline news around the world, and treasures beyond the imagination began to appear: golden chariots, death masks made from encrusted jewels and precious metals, everyday household objects that were familiar to the crowds, entire chambers full of immeasurable wealth that far outweighed anything Europe's aging monarchies had to offer or could match in such splendor and opulence. It was during this time that Egyptomania gripped the public's imagination, but behind the scenes, there was also a flurry of activity among the eminent archaeologists and Egyptologists as they raced to uncover artifacts and evidence that substantiated the biblical stories, searching for those all-important clues in the dusty ancient tombs as Egypt's glorious past was being sold at a rapid rate to the highest bidder.

Huge caches of artifacts in wooden crates were being loaded upon steam-driven ships at Port Said and Alexandria to be transported back to Europe and beyond by unscrupulous middle men who acted as agents for the universities and aristocratic houses, all gripped by the Egyptomania bug, hoping to find a lost treasure hidden in the sands of Egypt or find a clue as to the whereabouts of the stolen Ark of the Covenant by Pharaoh Sheshonq.

Many a myth and legend were being analyzed to find the scantiest truth and locate those clues in the temples and tombs of the ancients, hopefully hidden within the colored reliefs and hieroglyphic writings. It was a time when Egypt was truly plundered by the Europeans. Of course Luxor was by no means an exception; it was here that many a young aristocratic man or woman came to take part in the illegal excavations, hoping to find an artifact

that would secure his or her financial freedom. The West bank was a flurry of activity. No matter where you looked, there was an excavation of one kind or another taking place with the solemn tunes of the workers singing as they dug, removing centuries of sand and debris that had accumulated.

Sink Your Feet Into the Ancient Sands

So, what was ancient Thebes like for Moses when he lived there during his first 40 years as the adopted son of a royal princess? He was an Egyptian prince in all but name. Did he have all the freedoms and associated attributes that were customary to a royal prince of that time?

As the authors have two opposing theories, the landscape of the Theban necropolis looks different to both of us. John's theory is attached to the prolific building of megalithic structures that took place during the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep III, which changed the entire landscape forever. Scotty's theory belongs to that of a time when Pharaoh Hatshepsut walked among the living gods. Her grand temple clung to the Theban Mountain, its terraces adorned with huge statues proclaiming her rightful status as Pharaoh, remembering that she was indeed a *female* and not a *male* heir. However, these two periods of Egyptian history separated by less than a mere hundred years were considerably different in their settings. Military conquests, internal conflicts, and expeditions that flooded the land of Egypt with exotic goods, some of which had never been seen before, were all playing their parts in the development of these two opposing periods. The sheer wealth of Egypt was beginning to show through its Pharaohs' ambitious building programs, all of which were dedicated to glorifying and praising the gods for their protection and blessing that they had bestowed upon the people of Egypt.

If we amalgamate the two opposing eras within the Egyptian history and present that collective map to you, it should makes things a lot easier. No matter what era in which we place Moses, be that the time of Pharaoh Ramesses II (which the authors agree is nearly two centuries too late on the time line) or Amenhotep III, he still would have stood in the halls of Karnak, or at the foot of the terraced Temple of Hatshepsut, as well as her small temple dedicated to Amun at Medinat Habu. And he most certainly would have known of the kings' burials in the Valley of the Kings. It is plausible that he once stood on the Giza plateau and gazed at the wonder of his adopted ancestors' building achievements, the great pyramids, and placed an offering

at the paws of the Great Sphinx. It was at Saqqara that his possible adopted uncle, Crown Prince Thutmoses, participated in the sacred Apis Bull ritual with Pharaoh Amenhotep III. It would be wonderful to think that Moses once stood shoulder to shoulder with his uncle at that ceremony and possibly participated as a royal family member with all its rights, then destroying a similar effigy of the deity upon the fires at the foot of the Holy Mountain approximately 40 years later.

During that period there were no luxuries such as concrete and steel bridges that afforded one a safe crossing of the River Nile, nor had the motor boat been introduced with its petrol-driven outboards. One would have to pay the ferryman his due or live and work on one side of the river, only crossing when truly necessary, taking great care as not to wander too close to the Nile's edge, for lurking just beneath its murky waters, the Nile crocodile patiently waited for its next victim. It was not until the opening of the Aswan Dam in 1971 that the crocodiles eventually vanished from the Egyptian Nile riverbanks. Ceremonial practices took place along the Nile's edge to appease the Nile crocodile personified as the great God Sobek, the crocodile-headed deity that many a temple has been erected for in Egypt. It was considered a great honor to die in the crushing jaws of Sobek. However, it was probably not that honorable for the victim. During this period of history, the Nile was pivotal to the very existence of Thebes, its life-giving waters feeding the canals, which in turn irrigated the vast agricultural land that stretched along the flat lands. When the Nile flooded, it deposited its mineral-rich black sediment, giving Egypt one of its nicknames: the black lands. It was the ancient Greek historian Herodotus who stated that Egypt is the gift of the Nile, a sentiment that could not be closer to the truth.

Standing on the east banks of the River Nile during the New Kingdom (14th–19th Dynasties, 1550–1069 BC), looking toward the west bank, one would be greeted by a secondary island directly in front of where one is standing. This island gave its name to the village in which John lives today, Gezeirat, meaning "islands" in Arabic. Beyond this island, one would have been confronted by a series of complex canals fed directly by the Nile, denoted by their flag poles and landing stations, so they could still be navigated and used during the Nile inundation while the surrounding agricultural fields were covered by the rising flood waters of the Akhet season. These canals lead in straight lines to the various temples and shrines that dwelled on the west bank. The canals were not only transportation routes

but also fed the agricultural fields during the low season, filling the temple granaries each consecutive year with the harvest known as the Shemu season. Everything was monitored and measured precisely, and the Nileometers would provide the temple priests with the correct height of the Nile, allowing them to calculate how much land had been irrigated and thus how much land and crop would be subsequently harvested. This was all necessary in order to avoid a famine. The slightest mishap or miscalculation would bring chaos, which was personified as the God Seth. Everyone who was not of the higher class or royal household was either employed in the fields, temples, quarries, or any one of the many associated infrastructures that went into the continuity of life, and all were working for the common good of the populace, in a divine collective worship for the living God, the Pharaoh.

In terms of our interests, the important palace pertaining to our discussions was located at the end of the southern canal system, the palace of Pharaoh Amenhotep III, commonly known as the House of Rejoicing, home to not only one of the Pharaoh's private harems, but also the official living quarters of the royal family. In the 10th regal year of Pharaoh Amenhotep's reign he arranged a diplomatic marriage with Gilukhepa, the daughter of Shutturna II of Mitanni. Historical records have shown that she arrived in Thebes with the entire splendor acquainted with a pharaoh's wife, but also with 317 attendants in tow. Today, however, very little remains. Low-lying mud brick walls protrude out of the desert floor, a stark reminder of what was once probably one of the most splendid palaces in Egypt and home to some of ancient Egypt's most glorious historical figures: Pharaoh Akhenaten, Pharaoh Amenhotep III, Queen Tiye (daughter of the great noble Yuya and his ennobled wife Queen Tuya), and the Crown Prince Thutmoses, not to mention all the other countless siblings and servants from Pharaoh's extensive harem.

The Temple of Thutmoses III standing before the Tombs of the Nobles and the Theban Mountains.

The palace was extreme in every way for its day; excavations began in 1888 with initial minor exploration of the site carried out by Georges Daressy. Later, it was carefully excavated by the British Egyptologists Percy E. Newberry and Robb de Peyster Tytus, and again in the 1970s by Barry Kemp and David O'Connor. In the 1980s, a Japanese team uncovered dramatic ceilings that were painted with bright colorful scenes of wildfowl and nature; the floors and doors were ornately decorated as well. The steps were covered with images of bound enemies of Egypt, commonly known then as the "nine bows," so that as Pharaoh walked upon them, he was symbolically crushing them beneath his feet. Sprawling across the desert's edge, the palace was immense, with chamber after chamber and associated stores and servants' quarters. It was bounded to its eastern edge by the great lake of Birket Habu (Lake Malkata). The whole area would have been electric. No matter where you gazed, there would be something to see: the royal princesses and their female courtiers, playing and frolicking by the water's edge of the great lake while mocking the ever-watchful army officers; the chariots of Pharaoh's private guard racing along the canal's edge, checking on the sentries; the Pharaoh accompanied by his royal entourage as he harpooned Nile perch while his male courtiers jostled for that small gesture of appreciation from their living God; the queen and her royal fan-bearers fanning her gently as she reclined majestically upon the Gleaming Aten; and the Royal Princes, as they raced their horses around the tracks of the desert floor.

It would have been during this triumphant and splendid period that Moses

could have witnessed the building of the House of Millions of Years for Pharaoh Amenhotep III, his adopted grandfather, built and designed for him by the great architect Amenhotep, son of Hapu.

Now, if we were to stand on the roof of the House of Rejoicing, we would be able to enjoy one of the most spectacular views that ancient history could ever afford us. Looking directly eastward we would be able to make out the great Temples of Karnak and Luxor on the east bank with their associated canals and sphinx-lined avenues. Turning toward the north, we would view the small shrine to Queen Hatshepsut and Crown Prince Thutmoses, lying within the grounds of the mound of creation where the Ogdoad first appeared and created man from clay and fornicated with them to produce the children of gods. To the northeast we can clearly make out the tremendous Temple of Pharaoh Amenhotep III with the colossi statues standing guard over its entrance and its walls towering toward the heavens, permitting only the rays of Ra to enter its colonnaded halls.

Then a little further to the northwest we can make out the stepped temple of Queen Hatshepsut as it climbs the sides of the Theban Mountain, with its ornate pillared terraces and its central polished limestone stairway, ascending to its inner Holiest of Holies. To our left, there is the Theban mountain range as it rises out of the desert floor, sporadically intersected by small apertures, which would provide access to the private tombs of the nobles, the viziers of past pharaohs, and the higher classes of the Egyptian elite, retelling the glorious stories of their owners on the walls in colorful relief and painted scenes of everyday life. Nestled to the southwest and hidden behind the escarpment, the Valley of the Queens, where the royal burials of the harems are located, is a much smaller affair than that of the Valley of the Kings. No matter where we look, we see structure soaring toward the heavens, some colorful and some not, some shining so brightly in the outstretched arms of the sun God Ra that it is difficult to gaze upon them.

If we turn further to our left and toward the south, we can see the Theban mountain range as it continues southward like a chain of mountain ridges with the open desert at its feet, making out the odd band of caravan travelers as they meander along the trade routes that connect Thebes with the southern nome of modern day Armant, where hopefully they can sell their wares.

To the southeast, at the far end of Lake Malkata’s embankments, the ramped station stands next to the lake’s great feeding canal. This station with its steep ramp and miniature obelisks was built to receive Pharaoh

Amenhotep III during his Sed festival, a jubilee to celebrate his first 30 years as the living God over Egypt.

Now that you have a better understanding of the layout of ancient Thebes, it should not be too difficult to imagine Moses as the royal prince riding his chariot pulled by majestic horses alongside the canal from the banks of the River Nile to his adopted grandparents' palace, racing Thutmoses along the way, passing the fields of farmers, and hurtling past the ceremonial procession of priests making their way to one of the Houses of Millions of Years, carrying with them to the tabernacle the visiting god in his or her barque shrine, a small golden box with its ornately carved scenes and sacred texts, Nephthys and Isis at either end, their wings outstretched in a protective manner, while the shimmering box lay atop a small golden replica boat suspended by golden poles that rest upon the priests' shoulders bearing down the considerable amount of gold leaf that had been applied to all its surfaces.

A Barque Shrine carried on the shoulders of priests, from the walls of the Ramesseum, Luxor, Egypt.

Thebes would have been a tremendous sight, seeing the never-ending activity both on the east and west banks, fueled by the never-ending merchant ships that navigated the River Nile or the desert caravans that entered Thebes from both the eastern and western deserts via the heavily trodden trade routes.

These trade routes and the Nile River were the lifeblood of Thebes, and

without them Thebes would be no more than a small farming community, part of a larger principality that made up the kingdom of Egypt. It was these very routes that the quarried stone blocks would have been transported along, hundreds if not thousands of workers pulling a hand-woven rope of twine, all working as one cohesive unit to maneuver the blocks along these tracks. The mighty wooden sledges would be carrying the megalithic blocks of basalt, granite, limestone, sandstone, and other quarried stones that made up the funerary equipment and architectural details of the temples.

Seeing one of these stone caravans emerge out of the eastern desert from the quarries of Wadi Hammamat would have been a sight that one can hardly imagine. The oxen in rows of 10 deep, harnessed to huge ropes and tackle, and behind them row after row of men, with their backs bent as they pulled heavy upon the ropes that lay across them like a spider's web, while men and women carrying pots of grease and oil would splash the path ahead and under the wooden sledge as it slowly moved along the cleaned stoney ground, bearing the immense weight of the stone on its wooden raft. The dust rising from such a train would be seen for miles and the sounds could be heard across the desert floor to the outskirts of the Theban capital. Families began to line the streets to get a glimpse of their loved ones, throwing palm leaves and lotus petals at their feet, praying to the gods for the safe arrival.

The eastern trade route would have been the choice for the Exodus, providing them with a clearly marked route that eventually would have brought them to the shores of the Red Sea, or they could have branched off and taken the northern route that hugged the eastern mountain range and eventually ended up emerging by the mouth of the Suez Canal. Either way, they would have ended their journey on the main land at the same spot. (This is worth remembering for future discussion within the later chapters.)

One of the main archaeological problems that today's scholars face is the lack of archaeological material that pertains to the existence or location of the Theban acropolis, its town, its villages, and its suburbs. After years of excavations and clearing of accumulated debris, there is still no evidence to suggest sprawling cities, except for the worker's village in Deir el Medina, which lies at the foot of the Theban Mountains. Many archaeological investigations have been carried out here throughout the years, with mountains of material recorded and documented, but alas it does not shed light on the whereabouts of the main Theban city itself. The same can be said of the small settlements that have been located on the northeastern side of

Karnak Temple on the east bank.

The reason we bring this up now is to add this question mark to the Theban map that we have tried to emulate for you. The missing component raises important questions when dealing with the Exodus and alternative suggestions that we will explore later. But for now, it should be noted that, even though we have all this splendid architecture and grand landscapes, the actual towns and streets could have been located either on the west bank or the east bank, nestling between the various temple complexes. This has always been the suggested answer, and through the subsequent centuries these dwellings have merely succumbed to their natural fate of destruction caused by environmental erosion, and their remains reclaimed and reused in other building projects as time moved on.

The Theban necropolis was not inhabited by a mass population, but was, rather, a royal and ceremonial center with its associated workers and priests. The annual flood waters that rose with the inundation of the Nile must be taken into consideration when discussing the habitation of the common people; the low-lying lands that surround the temple complexes were indeed flooded during these high seasons. When Vivant Denon wrote his journal while accompanying the French scientific exploration team during the later part of the 18th century, he commented on the lay of the land, which he looked upon when he first arrived at Luxor. His maps clearly show a series of raised hills on two of which the temples of Luxor and Karnak were built. The west bank rises slowly toward the Theban Mountains, thereby protecting the temples and shrines that hug the western desert's edge. Could it be inconceivable to suggest that the same practice was employed for the smaller and common dwellings, building them upon artificial platforms of debris and accumulated silt and other organic material? Later during the mid-19th century, an English artist by the name of David Roberts painted a picture of the colossi of Memnon, which were surrounded by water at the time. This would suggest that the protective levies that retained the rising waters behind them had indeed been eroded, allowing the swollen river to gain further access across the low-lying lands. Could this erosion be the reason why we do not see any evidence of common habitation today? It is merely a theory but plausible at the same time.

Another theory or suggestion is that the commoners were possibly nomadic in their living styles, migrating back and forth as the river rose and sank with its annual seasons. This would provide us with the necessary

answers as to why there are no remains today, but again, we do not have any evidence to support this theory. When we gaze upon the relief scenes that adorn the temples and tombs throughout Egypt, we do not see tents or nomadic dwellers; what we see are small pillared courtyards with a surrounding structure that housed not only the owners but their servants and stores as well. The courtyard almost always had a central water feature with a small garden and a plantation of trees at the entrance outside. There are various examples of this design not only in relief, but also in scale models that were buried with their owners in the tombs of the nobles in Thebes, therefore suggesting that this type of housing actually existed not only in the afterlife, but quite possibly during their lifetimes. But *where?* In an unpublished account, John describes some of his findings as he explored the limestone quarries:

The Colossi of Memnon by David Roberts, 1848.

> In the ancient limestone quarries of Pharaoh Hatshepsut that lie to the north of the Valley of the Kings, there is plentiful evidence to suggest that they were inhabited after they became sources of usable limestone as building material. Their ceilings still bear the red painted lines with pictorial markings measuring the widths of the strata in readiness for extraction. On the walls in some of the galleries that are quarried caverns, we have observed early Christian graffiti in the form of white painted crosses, but again no Hebrew symbolism. In one of these galleries, I have recorded and documented the use of fired brick and mud brick used together to form inner walls that would or could have been used as a basic form of habitation. It is worth mentioning that these quarries lie on the main trade route out of Thebes on the west bank leading to the Farshout and Asyut regions of Egypt. From an historical point of view, these areas were close to the temple complexes of

Abydos and Dendera. There is no evidence to suggest that these quarries were used as places of refuge or habitation during the Pharaonic period, but during the Graeco-Roman period instead. However, they do provide us with a great example of how existing sites were reused for shelter and security.

Over the many years that I have researched ancient symbolism in Egypt, I have been fortunate to explore most of the Theban area and this includes the mountainous terrain and the trade routes and valleys that dwell within the Theban Mountains that contain a wealth of archaeological material, including inscriptions of dedications, adorations, mere name graffiti, and pictorial drawings; however I have yet to come across any symbols or associated inscriptions that pertain to a Hebrew connotation/relation. With all the various temples and shrines, canals, the great lake, and not to mention the thousands of tombs, the workforce that would have been needed to facilitate all these grand building programmes over the centuries would have been immense. But alas we do not have the common graves of workers of the time, we do not have their individual dwellings outside of the workers village; they just do not exist. Well not yet, anyway. Maybe yet to be discovered buried beneath meters of sand and debris, like Luxor temple was before the sands of time were removed.

Luxor Temple, before it was excavated, was buried almost up to the height of the inner courtyards. If one looks carefully today, one can still make out the post holes on the exterior and interior walls that once held the floor and ceiling timbers of the Christians and later Muslims that built their houses abutting the grand temple walls. The mosque that we mentioned earlier is located above the temple itself, sitting upon the pillars that stand in the first courtyard. With a doorway that now leads to nowhere, as the debris has now been removed one can freely walk through the inner courtyard at its original ground level.

What if the houses and mass burials of the common folk lie undisturbed beneath the modern city of Luxor today? It’s a maybe, a possibility. However, during the years of construction, no other remains have been discovered as yet.

Most of Egypt has a plethora of ancient sites that provide us with a wealth of material that deals primarily with the religious aspects of its society and the royal households, but no Pharaonic villages or cities have yet been discovered. There are plenty of examples, however, of Graeco-Roman architecture, so this does beg the questions: Where did they live? Where did the Hebrews, the so-called slaves of Egypt, live? When all is said and done, it is worth asking, when thinking about the great Exodus: Where did they all come from? This leads to the next question: *Where did they all live?* And where did the Hebrews spend their days in bondage? Was it in Goshen, or were they spread throughout the entire land of Egypt?

But before we dig in, let’s take a look at the continuing, sometimes-not-so-friendly dialogue between faith and academia….

CHAPTER TWO

Faith, in Fact, Is Not Fact–It's Faith. And That's a Fact. (You Can Bet Your Faith on It.)

Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.—John Adams

Faith as described in the Oxford English Dictionary: "Complete trust or confidence in someone or something; Strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof."

With faith as the cornerstone, any theory is possible and any story is plausible, no matter how far-fetched, outlandish, impossible, or improbable it may be, for faith cannot be controverted by fact, nor can any amount of evidence distract from things that are accepted under its force of power. But even faith has to have an object, or at the very least a *content*, because—to incorporate a double negative—you can't believe in *nothing.* So, faith, while being "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," as the Apostle Paul insists in Hebrews 11:1, must have some sort of tangible, substantive object in order to exist. For instance, to have faith in a god, there must be some tangible structure setting forth the character, attributes, acts, mandates, and expectations of that divinity in order to have faith that he/she/it actually exists.

The tale of Moses and his leading the Children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt, as found in the Old Testament's book of Exodus, is a story that has been written and rewritten to sustain the faithful followers of Jehovah. The account, as we find it in modern bibles, is truly only a reconstruction of whatever was originally written by the original author of the book, which is traditionally said to be Moses. The establishing historical data in the Old Testament account has been ignored, edited, or omitted, and only the

rudiments of the tale as it pertains to establishing the faith story remain intact for the reader, thus rendering the entire account as a means to bolster the faithful adherents to Jehovah worship, as opposed to being an accounting that bears information of historical or archaeological efficacy.

If History Doesn't Match Scripture, Then History Must Be Wrong. . . Right?

"The Bible says…" is an inordinately ineffectual mode of establishing the facts of any historical event mentioned in the scripture. Not because the story being referenced is innately false, but because the story has been incorporated into a book written for the purpose of building faith in religious followers as opposed to presenting information that places the tale into a historical setting. And when it comes to the story of Moses and the Exodus, the biblical account has a definitive "historical facts be damned" ring to it, as it is completely devoid of any solid reference that would allow the reader to establish without a doubt the who, what, where, when, and why of the story. The reasons for this blatant omission of fact from the biblical account are as highly speculative as they are overtly absent. To articulate the possible reasons as to why the facts were ignored would only serve as a speculative exercise. But in brief, the historical details were either omitted because the story itself is false and the writers wanted no connection made to any historical Egyptian monarch or archived event, or they were omitted because the purpose of the story's presence in the scriptures was important only for purposes of telling a version of the events that would satisfy the overall mandate to bolster faith. The intimate details of these would be distractions to the story of God's divine deliverance of his enslaved people.

By faith, one could assert that the story of Moses and the Exodus as presented in the Old Testament scriptures is complete and factual, despite not having the historical details enlisted. For faith, it is said in the three major religions of the world—Islam, Judaism, and Christianity—that the story is, indeed, truth, and that it is upheld and sustained by the divine will of God. Historical facts be damned. "If God had wanted the historical facts included, they would appear there," so say the faithful, "therefore, God must not have wanted the historical facts included in the passage for whatever his reasons might be. It is not mine to question, but rather to believe." And this is the issue of the faith perspective that allows for contradiction, historical

inaccuracy, and the ignoring of facts that may contradict, controvert, or somehow cast the scriptural story in a different light.

There have been a veritable plethora of books written on the topic of Moses and the Exodus, each one dealing with the story from one of three basic perspectives:

1. The story as found in the scripture is the absolute truth, and all you need to do is believe it.
2. The story as found in the scripture is absolutely false and part of religious legend and myth.
3. The story as found in scripture is based on factual events that have been clouded by the faith story and the passage of time. But the big question is how to decipher—or decode—which perspective is "true."

It is the contention of the authors of this book that the Exodus story is, indeed, a true story based in historical fact. It is also our contention that Moses is a historical character who was intimately involved in the real story behind the faith account recorded in the biblical text.

The Building Blocks of Deciphering a Story Rooted in Faith

During the past year or so we have deliberated over the issues that surround faith, burning the midnight oil as we explore its relationship to not only the books of Moses but our own respective theories within the pages of this book, and also its impact upon us both spiritually and emotionally. What is faith? How does one measure its impact upon our own sphere of influence? Does one necessarily have to follow a religion to have faith? To possess the ability and aptitude in one's emotional response to an event, and in doing so place the future consequences in the hands of faith is probably carried out by everyone on a daily basis, whether they serve within a religious community or not. We all have faith to a certain extent; it is how we interpret its effects upon our consciousness and sub-consciousness decision-making that determines its importance within our emotional state of mind. Is it all relative?

How does one truly describe the unknown? It is without form, shape, size, color, and depth, but it is that exact nothingness that faith feeds upon and

allows us to continue the journey of exploration, not knowing what life has in store or what is around the next corner. We place our lives in the hands of an unknown equation that we have no control over. For sure there are those who will argue that destiny and other related pseudo religious dogma rule or govern our very existence, and that placing oneself in that area of religious comfort secures one's fate. But is that not faith, the ability to embrace the unknown, and without fact or knowledge continue blindly without any further information regarding the next steps. We argue that one does not have to follow a religion to except the parameters of faith. If the emotional response to an experience leads to a series of events taking place that one does not have any control over, but is aware that they are the direct result of not reacting to the initial experience, is that not faith in one's own ability to allow the natural occurrence to take place, without interference?

However, when dealing with sacred texts and other related ancient writings we employ the faith card to come to terms with outlandish terminology and events that we have no comprehension of in our modern world. Faith restores our equilibrium; it allows us to continue without having a major breakdown and dismissing that which we are trying to understand. It is an emotional state of mind that allows us to believe in myth and legend. For many, faith is a state of mind, a self-preservation switch that allows one to view the world in a totally different sphere than that of those who surround them. Like an alternative personality it equips us to deal with those issues that we have no understanding of or control over, and in times of trauma it takes over as the main driving force behind our psyche. One could equate it to an adrenaline rush, but on a conscious level. We have heard it said many times: It is my faith that keeps me going. A direct association to a higher power; is that God or some other Supreme Being or manifestation? Drawing on that association on a spiritual level, that person feels that he or she can deal with the trauma in his or her life while finding some kind of solace in his or her respective religious text. But what exactly is this strength, and is it tangible? How can we measure its effects upon the human body in terms of energy and endurance? Was it faith or belief that gave us the strength to climb Serabit el Khadim in search of our respective viziers? To a certain extent, it *was* our passion, belief, and faith in what we were trying to achieve that provided us with the necessary tools and energy that allowed us to climb the mountain. However, to the point of exhaustion in some respects to reach our goals, we endured hardship and discomfort in pursuit of knowledge, but

always had faith and respect that we were on the correct path.

Do the Ends Justify the Effort?

Was it faith and belief that carried us to those heights? Or was it the end result that drove us? Walking in the area where Moses climbed the same mountain to receive the word of God, we had faith in our own theories to such an extent that they manifested as our staff that supported us on our journey.

Do we have faith that one day there will be world peace? Do we have faith that we can eradicate famine? Is it faith that saves us from immediate impact by a stray asteroid from outer space? Can faith and belief in a higher power restore our belief in humanity and its ultimate self-destructive outlook? In these circumstances the word *faith* can be used to determine one's own outlook on the greater picture, used as a common denominator that covers in general instead of a select few, but at the same time revealing a slight but ever-present religious undertone that serves as a backdrop to the word without becoming embroiled in religious dogma or scripture.

Faith as a word has become such a common metaphor in our modern world, yet it is also used to allow those within certain groups to continue along their respective paths regardless of the consequences or associated cost. It is widely accepted as a word associated with religion and other spiritual-based organizations, but is far stronger than using the word *belief* instead. To belong to a group that practices some sort of religious function, which has no foundation or physical representation within the sphere of quantifiable scientific methods, allows one to use the word *faith* as a defining metaphor. From our point of view, faith takes on a more religious tone and sets the bar at a height that we must walk under. It sets apart those who believe and those who question. But is there a harmony to be had between faith and fact? Can we truly merge the historical archaeological evidence with that of religious faith? We would like to believe there is a middle ground. We have faith in that!

The bulrushes along the River Nile.

Retracing the story of Exodus from its origin when Moses was floated within his pitch and reed basket upon the waters to where Moses died upon Mount Nebo overlooking the land of Gilead, we are presented with numerous acts of faith not only within the story, but in our ability to continue absorbing its contents. The binding word that is required to transform faith as an emotional reaction into a religious connotation is *belief*. To believe the contents of the story without question, to follow its word blindly, takes faith.

Faith Requires No Explanation, but Where Does That Lead Us?

To believe the story of Moses without questioning any one of his miraculous feats is an act of faith; the plagues of Egypt and their entailing devastation inflicted upon the ancient Egyptians need no introduction, but it is faith that allows us to comprehend the disaster that unfolded before them and that it was indeed the Lord God that brought such chaos to the Egyptian empire as directed by Moses and Aaron, and not some natural phenomena, although it could be said that any natural disaster is an act of God by design, and again falls on belief first and then is backed by faith second. Faith allows us to continue and oblige the narrative without looking for an alternative suggestive reason. But belief acts as a supporting agent to the faith, going hand-in-hand together, allowing us to take on board the stories of biblical greatness and yet equating them to a size and nature that are acceptable to our thought process, without having to question the parameters of their existence. So, faith and belief work together in a single harmony, allowing the reader or believer to continue with strength of the message behind the stories with

them, acting as their staff.

However, if one was to suggest a plausible alternative, does this then contradict the faith and belief in what one has just read? To a certain extent it supports it and underpins its validity without taking away any of its religious importance or the dogmatic role it has to play in the overall message. If the plagues of Egypt had a natural alternative explanation without taking away the devastating effects they had upon the ancient Egyptians, or the consequences of those affects with regards the releasing of the enslaved Hebrews, then does that then not support the message of God?

There are and will continue to be many times when we are confronted by the religious faith question; it is one that has continued to present itself to us time and time again throughout the researching of this book. Confronted by megalithic structures and characters that would have also trodden the same streets as Moses, do we have to take a leap of faith to believe this? To a certain extent we do, only because when confronted by that situation we have to have reference for the character of Moses; without it, one cannot place him there. This is one of the biggest problems that we have faced, and to a certain extent one that we do not have an answer for. Our own theories that we will discuss later pertain to various characters that we have researched, which could replace Moses as a biblical character, but not replace the events and stories behind him and his family.

This is the nature of dealing with a religious text that has been one of the main supporting pillars of the Judaic and Christian religions for thousands of years, which leads to another aspect of faith and belief in these holy texts: Are they considered metaphors for salvation, hiding behind a word or its meaning in a way that certifies one's own belief system? Is *faith*, as a word, a religion in itself, without having to label it? Do you have faith in God, but at the same time have problems in dealing with the written word of Man? It is a question that really should be addressed if God is the divine and almighty power in the universe, then having faith in his physical manifestation, Jesus, and the numerous prophets surely allows room for maneuver.

This comes down to interpretation, but an earthly interpretation at that. Without entering a huge debate on the metaphysical state of the universe and where divine begins and ends, John considers himself to be of a spiritual nature, but lacks the ability to believe without questioning the words set out in biblical scripture. That does not mean that he does not respect or adhere to its codes or rules, which are set down for humankind within its leafy pages.

No, he just does not possess the faith and belief in its actions and feats that are laid out. For the hardened Christian, he could be labeled as blasphemous for his words, but without context or reference, he has no evidence of representation with regard to the stories in Exodus. However, he can interpret them and place them in a context that he feels more comfortable with and, by doing so, share these insights and theories with others. But he cannot accept that you take them on faith, which would be placing him in the same context as the biblical scripture, something that would be a juxtaposition and contradictory.

For the ancient Egyptian, faith was a matter of everyday life; it was as natural as the rising of the sun in the morning sky, the inundation of the Nile waters bringing with it the fertile soil that allowed the great harvests to take place. Faith was their bedrock, in contradiction though, chaos brought with a devastating awakening that not all things could be controlled through the nurturing of the gods. If there was ever an opposite of faith I would suggest it would resemble something like the aspect of chaos that the ancient Egyptian feared so much. Nothing was left to chance: the daily routines, ceremonial practices, sacred rites, yearly festivals, and the never-ending servitude toward the ruling priest class and the divine personification of God on earth, Pharaoh. Everything centered on his well being; without a male heir to rule over men there would undoubtedly be chaos and thus disaster would strike. Belief and faith in the overriding state religion kept the populace at work, faith in the coming harvest, belief in the pantheon of Gods, faith in their ever Omni presence.

Has it really changed that much?

CHAPTER THREE

The Disaster

THE HAPU THREAD

The bright and lonely Sirius star hung low in the morning's eastern horizon of ancient Egypt, striking a balance between the late evening sky and the newly emerging dazzling rays of the Sun God Ra. He emerged triumphant once more from the belly of the Underworld, where he battled every evening to protect his beloved Egypt from the ever-present chaos. But the solitary Sirius not only heralded the new awakening, it also announced the long-awaited annual Akhet flood season, which would once again bring the life force that kept chaos at bay and allowed Ma'at to rule over Egypt for yet another year, bringing prosperity and peace to her lands.

A time of rejoicing and celebration was now upon the Thebaid, and the Sothic priests standing atop Thoth Mountain lit their sun-dried wooden beacons, their flames soaring high into the dusky morning sky. One by one, the lofty mountain peaks set light to their own declarations announcing the arrival of the annual flooding for all to see; it was unquestionably a great time of jubilation throughout the land.

Inside the elevated stone Temple of Sankhare the inner chambers rang out in solemn chants, interspersed with the musical chimes of the Hathoric sistrum as it was played together with the enchanting rhythmic beating of the tambourine. The air carried a scent of subtle burnt incense, while the white-robed priests offered their sacrifices to the gods and performed their libational ceremonies to Hapi, the hermaphroditic Nile God, praising and giving thanks for the bountiful harvest that awaited them.

Below them, the Theban necropolis laid quiet and still, and a low morning's mist hung like a soft blanket, covering the low-lying mud brick buildings, while the soaring architraves of the stone pylons broke through the low cloud cover. The towering rectangular mud brick walls of the House of Millions of Years sliced through the low mist, creating the illusion of a giant, enclosed milky lake. Wild jackals could be heard in the distance as they howled and cried out to one another, scavenging for their breakfast among the scraps and rubbish that were thrown out and discarded during the previous night's entertainment and celebrations. Thebes lay asleep, secure in its beds and in the arms of its loved ones, unaware of what was about to be unleashed from the bowels of the underworld.

Across the open fields planted with seasonal crops, the protective man-made dyke that served as a boundary between the swollen Nile and the western town lay still, while the eastern dyke stood defiant against the increasing current of the great Nile as its waters began to increase, protecting Ipet-resyt and the spectacular sphinx-lined avenue that terminated at the vast sanctuary of Karnak.

The quays and harbors of Thebes groaned and moaned as the wooden ships of differing sizes creaked with the swell of the water around their bows and sterns. The great flotilla moored outside Karnak was ready to receive its dignitaries and diplomatic guests that had gathered at the western royal palace a few days before in readiness for the great festival. The ferrymen pulled hard on their ropes, fighting against the amplified current of the Nile as they ferried their passengers, who were mostly servants and traders preparing for the day ahead, laden with their wares and goods.

An eerie silence emanated from both of the sacred sanctuaries, but within their respective hallowed stone walls the incumbent priests hurried around, preparing for the days' rituals, installing the necessary incense burners and numerous altars that brimmed with generous offerings, and dressing the divine idols within their private chambers. Meanwhile, the high priests of Karnak took to the sacred lake to perform their daily ritual of cleansing and purification: Descending the stone steps into the refreshing cool waters, they shaved their entire bodies and removed all that was impure upon and within them. They were presided over by their young apprentices who watched attentively, and made ready their consecrated robes and garments, which they would wear when presenting to the living idols. All were oblivious to the apocalyptic catastrophe that was about to take place.

Across the vast western lake of Birket Habu, the royal house of Pharaoh Amenhotep III showed signs of life, as the king and his harem slept peacefully within their respective bed chambers. His numerous young children were just beginning their day, and his older children, the Crown Prince Thutmoses and his younger brother (the future pharaoh) Amenhotep IV, had taken the opportunity to hunt in the secluded valleys of the Theban Mountains. His oldest daughter, Princess Sitamun, was already being prepared for the day's events, as this would be her first public appearance as the king's wife. Her friend and official mentor, Amenhotep, son of Hapu, had organized her staff and requirements the evening before, allowing him the extra time to rest. He had just returned from Kheny, where he had recently finished his third year of overseeing the extraction of stone blocks for the great Temple of Aten, built for the younger son of the Pharaoh, Amenhotep IV. The kitchens and servants of the palace ran around preparing the day's forthcoming festivities to celebrate the annual Nile inundation, while also tending to the needs and requirements of the vast number of dignitaries that were housed within the royal guest rooms to the east of the palace.

Further to the southwest, dust clouds could be seen rising from the desert floor where the king's loyal regiment carried out their drills, perfecting their routine that would march ahead of the Pharaoh and his household during the processional march later that day from Karnak to Luxor, and the royal quay that would later witness the Pharaoh disembark his Gleaming Aten barge.

The barge was moored at the palace's harbor and was also receiving its last preparations for the day's events. Its sails were lowered and re-wrapped, the decks were washed down and polished, and its royal cabins received their final adjustments to accommodate the royal couple and their off-spring as they would take to the lake's waters during the festivities later that day.

A little farther south, dull cracks could be heard from the western dyke, as she began to moan and cry out under the strain of the swollen river against her. Unable to fight off the ever-growing force of the flooded Nile and hold back the immense pressure any longer, she surrendered, collapsing in on herself, allowing the dark, muddy waters to cascade over her like silk. Washing down into the open fields below toward the sleeping Thebes, the irrigation ditches filled with the rushing waters, channeling them across the dry fields that had no time to soak up the moisture, carrying with them the loose debris and dry foliage that laid strewn across the ground, and picking up the shocked grazing cattle and donkeys in its path. The current continued

toward the narrow streets that were home to thousands. The maze of streets funneled the waters, lapping at the weak wooden doors. Oil lamps were lit, providing the necessary light to help young children to the safety of the rooftops. The men cried out to one another, racing to the now-broken dyke that was allowing the Nile to spew into Thebes. They hurried with their adzes and reed baskets to repair the damage and hopefully stem the ever-increasing rising waters, their wives screaming back to them as they huddled with their children for safety on top of the weak dirt rooftops while their rooms beneath them filled with muddy waters. The streets were now running rivers; the rubbish that once laid around now accumulated in the streets carried by the flood waters, crashing against the mud brick walls, which were becoming drenched in water and disintegrating at a rapid rate. The livestock were carried away by the rising waters, most succumbing to the heavy current and debris hidden beneath the murky waters. Those who were not fortunate enough to hear the initial alarms screamed and called out to those on the rooftops, holding their outstretched hands in the vain attempt of salvation, but alas there was no reprieve or assistance that could be given to them, as they, too, were swept away to their watery graves.

Then across the rooftops a thunderous crack was heard, followed by another, and again another. The great embankment walls of the lake began to buckle under the pressure of the waters, weakening the muddy supports. Then, with no warning, the embankment wall began to crumble; behind it millions of gallons of water hung in the air, almost motionless for a split second, before it came crashing down on the crowded rooftops below. The rooftops, unable to bear the weight and sheer force that bore down upon them, yielded and crashed into the waters like a house of cards, and were subsequently carried away by the immense currents. The occupants of the rooftops now struggled and clambered for the nearest floating material that they could cling to, and mothers cried out for their children as they were separated and torn from one another.

Street after street began to disappear beneath the waters now strewn with lifeless bodies, debris, and livestock as Thebes was systematically torn apart from its very core. The waters continued to pour from the lake and mixed with the swollen river water as it crashed against the western dykes' weakened walls, engulfing it in wave after wave, carrying away those men that ran to its aid only moments ago. The combined waters sent a huge wave of destruction toward the east bank and the Temple complex of Ipet-resyt.

At first it seemed as if the river's current would sweep the devastating wave of destruction downstream, but the sheer weight and momentum behind it could not stop, and it crashed against the east bank dyke, creating a huge hole in its defense. The sun court of the temple complex and the inner courtyards filled with the remains of the Theban west bank village, bringing the spindly scaffolding towers crashing down into the waters. Sphinx after sphinx was engulfed by the never-ending wave, sweeping and clearing the ground beneath it as it continued unabated, tearing at the roots of the tall and splendid palm trees that stood between the sphinxes, shattering the stone reliefs as they fell. The mixture of debris, palm trees, scaffold planking, brush, and the remains of houses interspersed with the contorted, broken, and ripped bodies created an avalanche from the depths of hell, on course with the house of heaven in a cataclysmic battle that would see no sure victor.

The ferrymen, unable to deal with the elevated waters, frantically hacked at their ropes, sending their crafts cascading down the river. Some survivors who managed to get through the first part of the event clambered and hung on to the ferries as they were swept downstream. The quays and harbors that held the collection of boats and barges fell victim to the wave from the west, as the ropes that held the fleet in place strained, stretched, and eventually snapped. Some boats drifted apart and crashed into one another, sending the wrecks to the bottom of the Nile, while others escaped and floated to the safety of the north, carried along by the strong current.

The Sothic priests of Sankhare could only watch in horror. The pylons that they had observed standing above the silky mist earlier in the morning now provided a sanctuary to those who clung to its very sides, the waters of the lake continuing to spill out like the intestines of slaughtered offerings. The once-magnificent towering mud brick walls of the House of Millions of Years disintegrated and slipped into the murky waters, no longer stretching toward the heavens. The view of the east bank was not as clear; but, it was obvious that the same fate had overtaken her, as well. Helpless, the priests could only watch with tears in their eyes, their arms and hands outstretched toward the heavens as they cried out to the gods for mercy and compassion for their fellow Thebans.

The priests of Karnak closed the mighty wooden doors of the great southern pylon, and having braced them from within, awaited the swollen current as it made its way down the processional route. All they could do was run from sanctuary to sanctuary grabbing what idols and service ware they

could to protect them from the oncoming chaos. Then, as if made of twigs, the huge wooden doors burst open, just as the formidable Apophis himself had smashed his way through. The priests were washed away with the deluge, as the remains of both east and west poured through the now-broken doorway, and the rubbish, which accumulated behind it, piled up higher and higher, crushing those who clung to the floating debris. The inner courtyards filled with the contents of both the east and west as it was carried in on the water's crest. The pillared halls of Karnak now smelled of dirt and only the cracking of bones against stone and the bloodcurdling screams of those being squashed and buried beneath the palm trees could be heard. Other floating debris rolled uncontrollably in between the pillars and statues. The gods had abandoned them all, and slowly the screams and cries diminished to just a few, as death had come to Karnak.

The destructive flood now found its natural course and began to take the waters back to the river. The lake, having emptied upon Thebes, lay empty and shallow, with its base writhing with fish that jumped and gasped for air in its muddy slip. The hippos that once grazed among the bull rushes now languished in the mud. The Gleaming Aten lay broken in the bottom of the lake, her masts and rigging snarled and entangled among the remains of the royal cabins, which now stood empty and filled with mud and debris, fit for no man or swine, let alone Pharaoh and his family. What was once the crowning glory of Thebes now lay bare, empty and bereft, once built by the royal architect Amenhotep, son of Hapu, as part of the Pharaoh's ambitious plan of restructuring Thebes.

Thebes had been destroyed, wiped clean from the earth by the hands of the gods of chaos. It was no more, and only the screams and cries of the survivors and those who were still trapped or injured could be heard across the wasteland. Only the royal palace was left unscathed, protected by its location high up on the desert floor and behind the great lake, as suggested to Pharaoh by his eminent architect, Amenhotep, son of Hapu. One might ask if he had foreseen this apocalyptic event, hence his recent return to Thebes.

The streets that were once filled with traders and Thebans now lay hidden, buried beneath tons of mud and debris. Where houses once stood, now only twisted wrecks of mud provided evidence of what was. It was difficult to discern where one street ended and another began. Only the stone structures stood defiant, lashed by the muddy waters and blood-spatter, as livestock and Thebans were thrown against their walls like confetti, breaking

their bodies like glass, leaving behind shadows of their victims as a stark reminder of the morning's horrific events.

As the Sirius star began to disappear in the haze of the dawn, Ra began to emerge on the eastern horizon, bringing with him the first rays of light descending upon what was left of the once glorious cradle of life. Where was he now? Where were the gods earlier that morning when the people needed them? Some wailed and threw dirt into their hair, screaming hysterically as they mourned their dead, while others cried and embraced those who they were reunited with in this darkest hour before dawn. Seeking blame and assurance at the same time, the heavens lay silent. Only Sobek the crocodile god spoke out as he roamed the disaster area gorging and feeding upon the drenched carcasses as they lay in their thousands among the remains. Along with the dead, the injured lay incapacitated; trapped beneath the remains of the houses and debris, they, too, were being torn limb from limb as Sobek and his many cousins enjoyed their easy pickings, the blood only adding to the image of misery and woe, as great pools began to build up from the crocodiles' feeding frenzy.

The jackals returned from their safe mountain lairs, responding to the stench of death in the air. Even Horus joined them, along with Thoth, as they, too, tore at the exposed innards and blood-stained flesh, pecking at the eyes of the dead, stabbing their victims with their incisor beaks while Horus ripped at the flesh with his hooked beak and talons. The Goddess Nekbet circled above them all, waiting for the dead to ripen in the heat of Ra as he climbed even higher into the morning sky. The surviving family members could only look on with terror as they were incapable and helpless to stop this horrific and ghastly show and ask: When would this nightmare end?

Egypt had never witnessed such a tragedy in all its history. What was left of the holy priests of Karnak and Ipet-resyt were now unified with the people, as they too searched the wreckage for survivors and their own brethren, hoping to find answers in their prayers and spells. It was impossible to believe that only a few hours earlier Thebes was celebrating the rising waters as it had done for countless centuries. If only they had known what was in store for them, the entertainment might have been less jovial. Instead of presenting bountiful seasonal offerings and seductive libations, the priests were now offering comfort and their crude and somewhat-barbaric medical assistance to those who required their educated minds. Mummy wrappings that would have served those in the afterlife were now being wrapped upon

the living. The embalming tables that usually served the dead were now lined with the wounded. The sanctuaries that once held the golden statues of their beloved gods were now filled with the injured as they sought shelter and security within the remaining stone walls.

Pharaoh sat speechless upon his throne as his viziers recanted to him the death toll and tally of destruction that had been unmercifully unleashed upon his beloved kingdom. His royal court filled with the remnants of the higher aristocratic families, all wanting an audience with Pharaoh to answer the pressing question as to why them and why now? Had he received word from his father, Ra? What would become of them? Had his wayward and misfortunate younger son foreseen this disaster coming in a prophecy, hence his plans for the new city of Akhetaten to the north? Were the rumors of Amenhotep, son of Hapu, true? Had he really informed Pharaoh of this calamity? Were the shepherds and lepers to blame for Egypt's chaos? Is this why they had been removed from the security of the cities to the abandoned quarries? Had they truly been spared by the gods?

Fingers began to point and low whisperings echoed throughout the court as gestures toward the eminent sage Hapu began to multiply. High officials and nobles began to single out the scapegoat who would take full responsibility for the catastrophe that had just attacked their kingdom. Hapu was their obvious target of aggression; it was, after all, his grand lake that had just spilled its guts across Thebes. Everything that he had built and overseen had been turned to ruins and was the cause of so much heartache.

Chaos now reigned upon the throne of Egypt. What little resources they had left were being pushed to the limits. Word had been sent to the four corners of the land, recalling the armies on the furthest outposts to return to their grief-stricken homeland, leaving behind unprotected borders between Egypt and her nine bows. But it would be days if not weeks before they could all return. The dignitaries and special guests that had travelled to Thebes to join in the festivities now left by whatever means they could find, their boats and other modes of transportation swept away or destroyed in the flood. Fleeing a devastated land and its distraught people, they hurriedly left their private quarters, taking with them anything and everything they could carry to aid them in their long journeys home.

All Pharaoh could do was to sit in silence, slightly slouched with his hands resting on the base of his neck as he listened intensively to the cacophony of voices around him, hearing all although understanding none.

Why had this happened to him? Had he not been a faithful servant? Had he not provided the greatest city for all to live in and prosper? Had he been a bad ruler? What had he done to deserve such punishment? Turning to his eldest children for support he found them wanting. His younger son Amenhotep IV was holding court with a few select few viziers, while his older son, the Crown Prince Thutmoses shouted angrily at those who approached Hapu. His new wife and elder daughter sat at his side with tears in their eyes. They could only weep and think of their brave maidens that were washed away while they played and bathed in the cool waters of the lake. It was only by the grace of Amun-Ra that she had not joined them this morning as she usually did. Pharaoh’s kingdom was no longer a gleaming one, but a dark, hideous nightmare to which he could see no end.

CHAPTER FOUR

Strangers in a Not-So-Strange Land

THE SENENMUT THREAD

Writing any book on the topics of Moses, the Hebrews in Egyptian captivity, and the Great Exodus is fraught with all matter of challenges, ranging from dating systems and chronologies of royal Egyptian families, to sifting through the available archaeological and historical data, which many times needs to have a healthy dose of circumstantial speculation applied. But that speculation is not merely the stuff of imagination and wishful thinking, as some in the academic community would like to believe. The route that has to be taken, in light of the fact that there is no direct evidence proving the Hebrews ever existed in Egypt, is one that needs to address whether the entire biblical account is even plausible: *Did it actually happen?* Juxtaposing that question with the available historical and archaeological data could, then, lead to the possible conclusion that the story, as recorded in the Old Testament, bears historical efficacy.

To put it bluntly, the biblical account of the Hebrews dwelling in Egypt as slaves to a series of pharaonic monarchs, as well as their eventual emancipation under a single leader, has proven to have no historical or administrative documentation that would support a scriptural claim that any of it ever happened *in any period* of Egyptian history.

So, we are forced to conclude on the simple merits of the claims made within the biblical documents and the absence of any direct, corresponding archaeological data that the Great Exodus never occurred. And further, that its main character, Moses, never actually existed outside of Israelite legend.

But that is not the end of the story; otherwise this would be a very short book. This is where the search for the *real* story begins. Perhaps we need to consider the likely probability that our expectations on archaeology are simply too great. And short of an inscription stamped on a mud brick stating "Made by Hebrew Slaves," it is extremely difficult to identify specific Israelite connectivity to a people who were not much more than a semi-nomadic tribe and a migrating Semitic clan.

The story of the Hebrews' Great Exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses is, in fact, one of mankind's most researched and debated events in antiquity, and without a doubt one of the greatest historical mysteries of civilized humanity. Make no bones about it, the presence of the Exodus event in ancient Hebrew scripture, coupled with the long memory and tradition that elevates it as the literal history of the founding of the Jewish religion and the nation of Israel, entitles it to weighty consideration. The notion that a book of faith cannot house real, historical events is the machination of those who would diminish the record as simple literary invention. And although there is an inordinate amount of heritage-building and faith-bolstering in the existing account contained in the Torah, the events are repeatedly mentioned in the Old Testament books of history and the books of the prophets as historical events that founded the nation of Israel. These cannot be offhandedly discarded simply because they reside in a book of faith. And the historical references—as well as the lack of detailed information set within those references—needs to be explored for veracity and a determination of fact over fiction.

By way of example, fast-forward to the New Testament and the Gospels. For centuries it was believed that Pontius Pilate, the governor of first-century Judea during the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, was nothing more than literary invention—a character in the so-called "Jesus myth." That is until 1961, when Italian archeologist Dr. Antonio Frova was excavating an ancient theater in Caesarea Maritima, the first-century Roman capital of Judea, and uncovered a cornerstone dating to that same period. It bore the inscription of one "Praefectus Pontius Pilatus," dedicating the building as the "Tiberiéum"—an obvious homage to Emperor Tiberius Caesar Augustus. The limestone block currently resides in the Israel Museum,[1] and though the academic community calmly rolled with the discovery, this significant historical find did not eliminate the subtext of bias with which they continue to approach biblical history.

Is this what it looked like? *Moses on Mount Sinai* by Ean-Leon Gerome.

As this chapter will demonstrate, in order to get to the roots of any historical mystery of this sort, we must first begin with the foundations of the story. And although we do not wish to over-burden you with a simple re-telling of the somewhat "stripped down" biblical chronology, we feel it is necessary to provide you with the foundational information as it reads from the source point of the story: the biblical record. And lest you charge us with attempting to "prove" scripture by use of scripture, we will simply admit it here and now: Sometimes the individual books of the compiled scripture must be examined as an extant source for corroborating details.

In addition, it is also very important to take into consideration that it was never the habit of any given pharaoh to record his failures and humiliations. All you need do is look at the existing temple inscriptions and stele to see that the pharaohs *never* included events that expressed their deeds and military actions in any sort of negative light. These monuments and inscribed stones existed for the sole purpose of recording, *for all time*, the glories and accomplishments of the Pharaoh, trumpeting his triumphs and vaunting his valor, sometimes even to the point of distorting the facts, and diminishing setbacks and defeats in order to make a permanent record that portrayed him better than he was. A prime example is the record of Ramesses II's glorious victory at Kadesh inscribed on the walls of the Ramesseum at the Temple of Amun at the Karnak temple complex in Luxor (ancient Thebes). We know from other extant contemporary records that Kadesh was nothing more than Ramesses II narrowly avoiding an abysmal defeat.

The relief of Ramesses II at the Battle of Kadesh on the walls of the Ramesseum in Luxor.

Likewise, there is no stele that exists whereupon one would find the complete and utter defeat and humiliation of a pharaoh at the hands of rebellious, fleeing slaves who routed the magnificent strength of his standing armies.

So, who were the Hebrews? Where did they come from? Why were they living in Egypt and how did they become enslaved as a whole people? Understanding these basic questions will lead to a much richer experience when looking into the life of one of the displaced Hebrew's children—a child who grew into the man honored by three major religions of the world.

The House of Jacob

> 1 So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beer-sheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2 And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!"
>
> "Here I am," he replied.
>
> 3 "I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4 I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

> 5 Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. 6 So Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt, taking with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan. 7 Jacob brought with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters—all his offspring.
>
> —Genesis 46:1–7

According to the Old Testament book of Genesis, the Semitic family clan of the House of Jacob (who was also know by the name Israel) migrated to the fertile southeastern Nile delta region of Egypt, seeking relief from a famine in their homeland of Canaan. The biblical story also details the account of one of Israel's sons, Joseph, who was sold, out of jealousy, into slavery by his older brothers. The account tells us that Joseph suffered through hardships and imprisonment, and eventually, years later, was elevated to the highest position in the land of Egypt as the royal vizier to the Pharaoh—and all because he was able to interpret the monarch's dreams and lay out a plan for surviving an impending famine.

According to the biblical text, Joseph is given the Egyptian name Zaphnath Paaneah, and he married an Egyptian woman named Aseneth, the daughter of Potipherah (Pentephres in the Septuagint), priest of On. But, as with the story of Moses and the Exodus, there is no conclusive evidence that Joseph ever existed outside the scriptural account.

The etymology of the name Zaphnath Paaneah has been a topic of great debate and dispute, as it has no direct Egyptian source, but "looks" Egyptian and can be loosely translated to mean "the man to whom mysteries are revealed" or, according to first-century historian Josephus, "a finder of mysteries." Coptic has the name as "a revealer of secrets," and the Egyptian translation, while having no meaning for Zaphnath, contains p-ôn, meaning "the life." Another meaning, however, translates the name as "e(d)-p-nute(r)-ef-on" meaning "the god speaks [and] he lives."[2] This last version of the name became popular, but has no linkage to Joseph's Egyptian title or office, and has appeared so differently between the Septuagint and Hexaplaric versions that it is conjectured that the name was disfigured by the earlier Hebrew scribes.[3]

So, you can see that even the definition or translation of Joseph's Egyptian name is something that has no direct correlation or interpretation to any historical records, revealing again the problems in deciphering any bits and pieces of the biblical story. Moses, the traditional author of the

Pentateuch—inclusive of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—seems to have either deliberately left out critical information, or said information has been distorted by later copyists and scribes. Or, we can simply be led to the conclusion that the entire tale is merely nothing more than literary fiction.

So once again we are brought back to finding whether or not the story has any secondary archaeological evidence that might establish connective veracity to the scriptural account; if it doesn't, what are the ramifications?

In the book of Genesis, the entire story of Joseph spans several chapters —37 to 50—and they contain the dramatic account of Jacob/Israel's emigration to Egypt. In the story, Joseph was raised from slavery and imprisonment to a position of great power in Egypt, becoming the man through whom Jacob and his sons must obtain permission to settle in the Nile Delta region. Joseph recognized his brothers when they came to Egypt pleading their case for resettlement, but Joseph initially hid his identity from them. This is the story as recorded in the biblical account of Genesis 45:1–28:

THE COLOSSI OF MEMNON STATUES OF AMENHOTEP III IN LUXOR

AMENHOTEP SON OF HAPU

THE 80-YEAR-OLD GRAND VIZIER AND HIGH PRIEST TO PHARAOH AMENHOTEP III, BESTOWED WITH THE HONORABLE TITLE OF HEREDITARY CROWN PRINCE AND STEWARD TO THE PRINCESS AND GODS WIFE, SITAMUN, CHIEF OF ALL PUBLIC WORKS AND THE ARMIES OF PHARAOH.

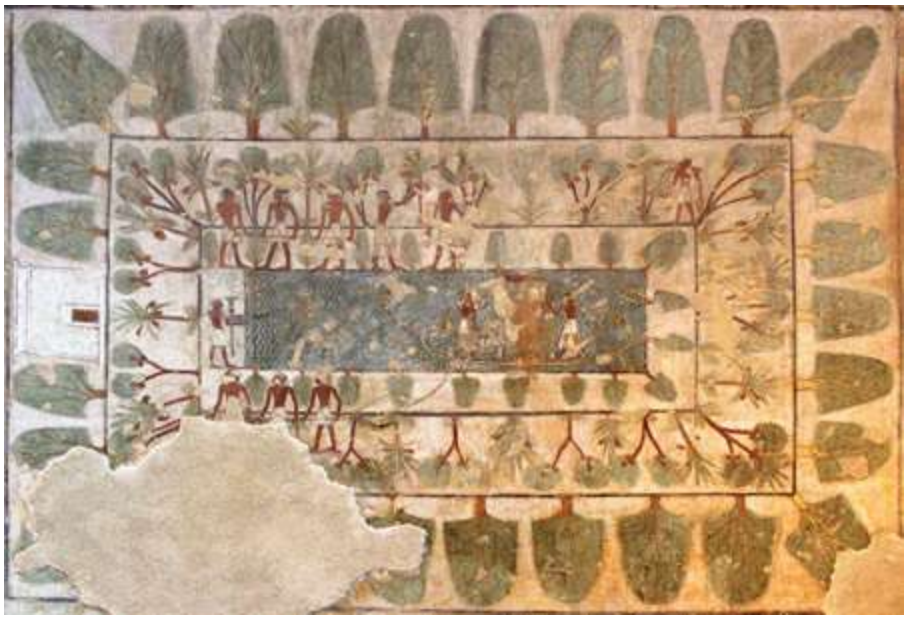
A VISIONARY ARCHITECT AND ENGINEER, HE WAS EVENTUALLY DEIFIED AS A GOD OF HEALING AND PHILOSOPHY.

COULD HE BE THE VERY SAME MAN WHO LED THE SURVIVORS OF THEBES TO THE SAFETY OF THE SINAI, THUS GIVING RISE TO THE HEBREW LEGEND OF MOSES?

ALL PHOTOS IN THIS SECTION COURTESY OF THE AUTHORS

LAKE MALKATA

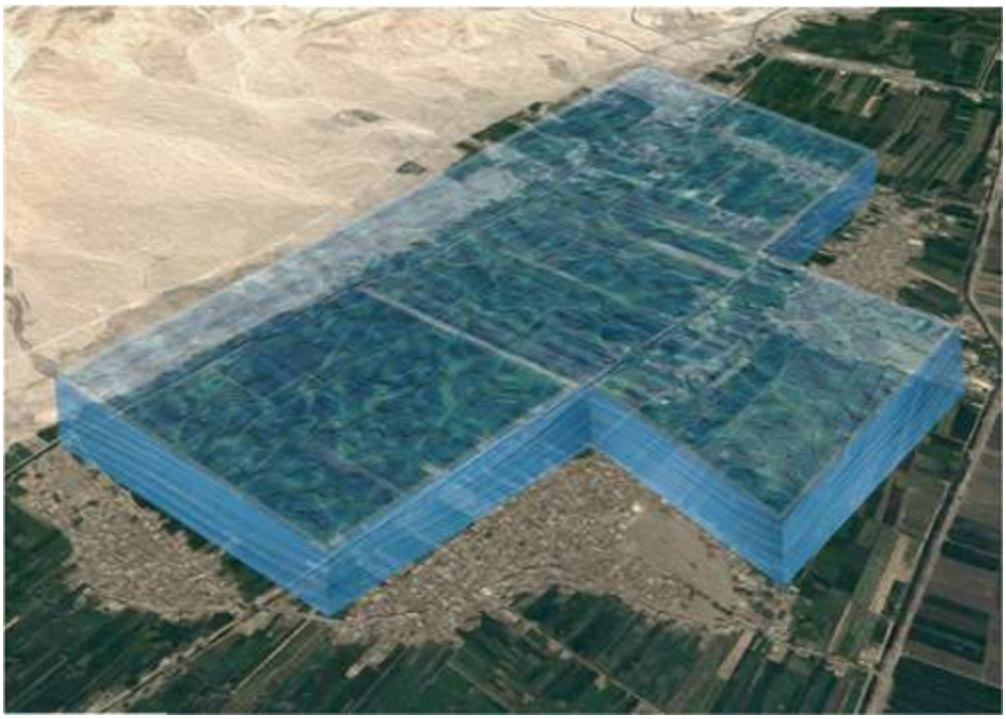
THE MAN-MADE SAC RED LAKE OF A BETWEEN THE WESTERN D ESERT AND TH E NILE RIVER IN LUX OR (ANCIENT THEBES). TODAY, THE REMNANTS OF THE MILE-AND-A-HAL F-LONG BODY OF WATER IS FILLED WITH AG RICULTURAL F IELDS, AND IS BARELY DISC ERNABLE FROM TH E GROUND; FROM TH E AIR, HOWEVER, IT CAN B E SEEN QUITE CL EARLY, AS THE DIAGRAM TO TH E RIGHT ILLUST RATES.



A SACRED LAKE FROM THE TOMB OF REKHMIRE, GRAND VIZIER UNDER AMENHOTEP III

DR. WARD AT THE BARQUE SHRINE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT, LUXOR TEMPLE

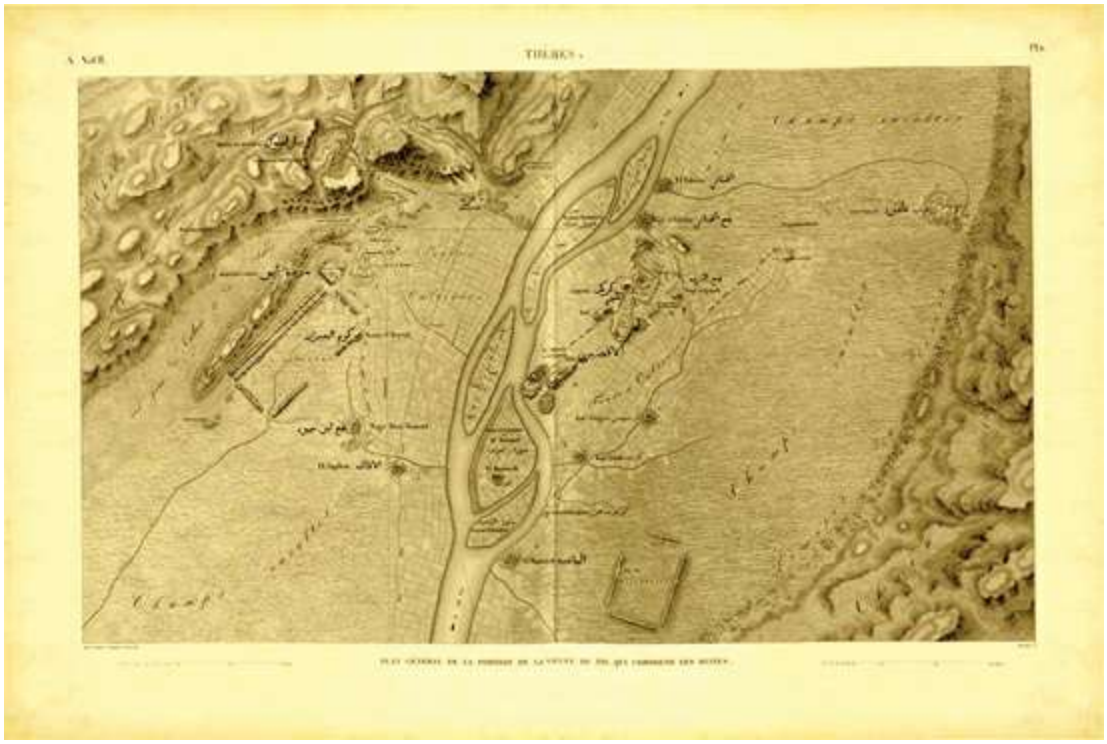
THE RUINS OF THE PALACE OF AMENHOTEP III



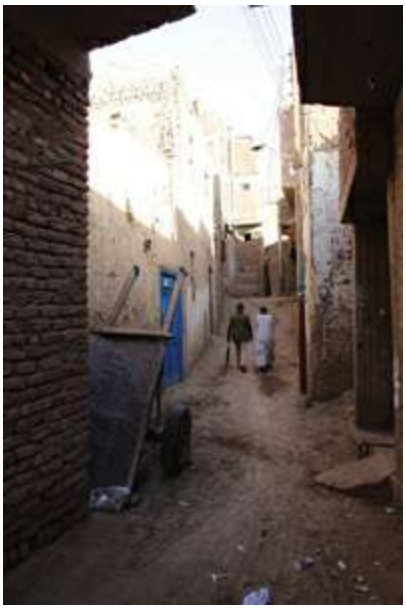
THE WALLS OF THE 3,500- YEAR-OLD THE WALLS OF LAKE CAN STILL BE SEEN BEHIND THE MUD BRICK H OUSES OF TH E CLUTTERE D VILLAGES THAT DEFINE THE ANCI ENT PERIMETER OF MALKATA.

NAPOLEONIC MAP
OVER A 20-YEAR PER IOD BEGINNING IN 1798, 150 SCHOLARS AND 2,000 M ECHANICS AND ENGIN EERS COLLBORATED ON LE

DESCRIPTION DE L’ÉGYPTE, A MULTI-VOLUMED COLLECTION INITIATED BY NAPOLEON BONAPARTE UNDER TH E IMPERIAL PRESS IN PARIS IN 1802. THE MAP BELOW, DETAILING ANCI ENT THEBES AND LA KE MALKATA AND ITS SISTER LAKE TO THE EAST, IS ONE OF THE PLATES FROM THE ORIGINAL VOLUME.



BACKGROUND IMAGE: FROM THE TOMB OF RAMOSE



LAKE MALKATA AS IT APPEARS TODAY, FROM THE ROOFTOPS OF EL KOM, A SMALL VILLAGE CROWDED AGAINST THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE ANCIENT RUINS.

BELOW: DR. WARD POINTS TO THE SAHARA DESERT BEYOND THE LAKE'S WESTERN PERIMETERS.

THE CEREMONIAL KEY OF KARNAK
THE PHARAOHS EMBARKED AND DIS EMBARKED FROM THIS B

OAT LANDING WH EN COMING TO WORSHIP AND B E WORSHIPPED. THE NINTH PYL ON RISES IN TH E DISTANCE.

THE TEMPLE COMPLEX OF MEDINAT HABU STRETCHES ACROSS THE HORIZON, WHILE THE TEMPLE OF AMENHOTEP III LIES IN UTTER RUIN ON THE FRINGES OF THE WESTERN DESERT, JUST

ACROSS THE DIRT ROAD FROM A LOCAL RESTAURANT.

BACKGROUND IMAGE: FAR TO THE NORTH OF LUXOR, NEAR CURRENT DAY CAIRO, IS SAQARRA'S NECROPOLIS - THE CITY OF THE DEAD.

THE PROTECTIVE WADJET LINES THE TOPS OF THE WALLS SURROUNDING SAQARRA'S COURTYARD.

GIZA
DR. JOHN WARD

1 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out,
“Have everyone leave my presence!” So there was no one with Joseph when he made
himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and
Pharaoh’s household heard about it.

3 Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But his brothers were
not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said,
“I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! 5 And now, do not be distressed

and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. 6 For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. 7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 “So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. 9 Now hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay. 10 You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. 11 I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.’”

12 “You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. 13 Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly.”

14 Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. 15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

16 When the news reached Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. 17 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, 18 and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.’

19 “You are also directed to tell them, ‘Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. 20 Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.’”

21 So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. 22 To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of clothes. 23 And this is what he sent to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other provisions for his journey. 24 Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, “Don’t quarrel on the way!”

25 So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. 26 They told him, “Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt.” Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. 28 And Israel said, “I’m convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

As you can see from this lengthy excerpt, it is a finely crafted tale of

immense human emotion and dramatic effect, laying the groundwork for how and why the ancestors of Moses came to dwell in the land of Egypt. If you read the entire account in scripture, you see from the very beginning the growing, glowering jealousy of Joseph's older brothers and feel their seething disgust as they learn that their youngest brother, Joseph—the child of their father's old age—is the apple of the old man's eye.

But then Jacob had to give Joseph that damned multi-colored cloak! The "coat of many colors," so much more beautiful than any of the homespun garments their father had ever given them, was imbued with so much more honor and favor than they had ever seen their aging father bestow on any of them. Joseph represented to this dysfunctional lot of men the essence of a young punk who usurped all that they had ever wanted from their father, and they grew to hate Joseph for his prized position as "favorite son."

And the Dysfunctional Family of Canaan Award Goes To...

As the story goes—whether out of youthful innocence or obnoxious conceit—Joseph has the audacity and privileged gall to tell his brothers of his prophetic dreams in which he saw them all gathering sheaves of grain, and in the end, all his brothers' sheaves bowed down to Joseph's sole standing sheave. Then Joseph tells of a second dream, in which he saw the sun, moon, and 11 stars all bowing down to him. The brothers were already in a hateful bitter mood, but now even Jacob bristled, telling Joseph he should really not speak of those sorts of dreams anymore.

His brothers began to plot. One day Jacob sent Joseph to meet his brothers in Shechem where they were tending their flocks. But when Joseph arrived, they were gone. A man there told him that they had moved on to Dothan, so Joseph traveled on. At Dothan, his brothers saw him coming and plotted to murder him. "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams" (Genesis 36:19–20).

Reuben, the eldest, intervened and talked them all out of killing Joseph, but said to throw him in the dry cistern to teach him a lesson. Later that day, a Midianite merchant caravan came by and the rest of the brothers, unbeknown to Reuben, sold Joseph for 20 shekels of silver. When Reuben returned to the cistern, he asked the brothers what they had done with Joseph, and when they

told him, he tore his garment and cried. So to cover their deed, they tore up Joseph's robe, smeared it with goat's blood, and presented it to their father, Jacob.

> 34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave." So his father wept for him. 36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.
>
> —Genesis 36:34–36

You can feel the pain of the young man when he is betrayed and sold into slavery by them. Once in Egypt, Joseph was purchased by an Egyptian official named Potiphar and appointed the chief steward in his household, where Joseph continually thwarted the advances of Potiphar's wife, who made several attempts to lure him to her bed. One afternoon she cornered Joseph, who again refused, only this time he ran, leaving his coat in her hand, and in scorned anger she cried rape. Joseph was arrested and imprisoned by Potiphar. Because rape was a capital offense in ancient Egypt, it can be speculated that Potiphar, in only imprisoning Joseph, did not necessarily buy his wife's story. While imprisoned, Joseph was elevated to a position of presiding over the other prisoners by the jailor, and he later interpreted the dreams of two servants of the Pharaoh who had been imprisoned. His ability to interpret dreams was eventually brought to the Pharaoh's attention and Joseph was asked to interpret a dream for him. The Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph that he elevated him to high status, and as the biblical story goes, Joseph was given power over everything in Egypt, save for the throne itself. This set Joseph up to be the savior of his family, who then migrated to Egypt's delta region during the Canaanite famine.

The story of Joseph is a magnificent tale set against the Canaanite wilderness and the royal households of Egypt. But once again, the problem is that there is no direct historical evidence of these events ever taking place. So, again, one must rely on secondary archaeological evidence to see if the story is plausible.

Touched Down in the Land of the Delta

Throughout this entire book one question will continue to be asked: *Did it*

ever really happen? Although no direct documents or inscriptions state the family of Jacob from Canaan relocated to the Delta region, there are plenty of accounts of Middle Eastern "Asiatic" tribes moving into the eastern Nile Delta during times of drought and famine in order to water their flocks and subsist off of the rich land between what is now the Suez Canal and current-day Cairo. In the midst of this region lay the Middle Kingdom city of Memphis and the fertile area to the northeast referred to as the land of Goshen, as mentioned in the Genesis text. These migratory forays into Egyptian land were not always sanctioned by the Egyptian government, nor was it always smiled upon, but in many cases it was allowed with permission, and sometimes simply permitted without incident. Some of the existing ancient texts specifically indicate that western Asiatics came to the Nile Delta on a regular basis, and these migratory excursions took place often enough during a 700-year span in the second millennium BC as to be standard fare in the region. This is demonstrated in Miriam Lichtheim's account:

> All happiness has gone away, the land is cast down in trouble because of those feeders, Asiatics (sttyw) who are throughout the land. Enemies have arisen in the East, Asiatics (‘amu) have come down to Egypt.... One will build the "Walls of the Ruler" to prevent Asiatics (‘amu) from going down to Egypt. They beg for water in the customary manner in order to let their flocks drink.[4], [5] (Neferti, Egyptian sage, ca: 1900 BC)

James K. Hoffmeier also writes:

> Papyrus Anastasi 6 (from the reign of Pharaoh Merneptah (1213–1203 BC), contains a report from a border fort in the Wadi Tumilat region that an Edomite Bedouin tribe was permitted to "...pass the fortress Merneptah-hetep-hir-maat which is in Tjeku (Succoth)' to water their flocks at 'the pools of Pi-Atum.'"[6]

The problem with the Delta region is that it is so wet, due to thousands of years of Nile inundation and regional humidity, that no documents remain from these periods. Excavations of sites in this region are hampered by ground water levels and extreme moisture, but there are more than half-a-dozen archaeological sites in the eastern Delta and Wadi Tumilat wetland lake region north of the Red Sea that have offered up Canaanite artifacts, some of them being attributed to the Semitic-speaking tribes that became associated with the Hyksos, a Middle Eastern people who ruled Egypt from their capital city of Avaris from 1650 to 1540 BC, Avaris being an earlier name for the treasure city of Pi-Ramesses.

Note the number of different peoples waiting to see the Pharaoh. The "Asiatics" filtered in from Canaan, Syria, and everywhere else during times of drought and famine. From the tomb of Tomb of Khnumhotep.

There is definite historical precedent establishing the presence of Semitic people in the Delta region of the Nile. Identifying any of these Semitic people as "Hebrew" is something that, to date, has been an impossible task, as no records exist that call them out specifically by name. Their presence, however, is something that is, in accordance with secondary archaeology, consistent with the existing historical records, lending more credence to the biblical account of the migration of Jacob/Israel's family.

The Genesis narrative tells us that Jacob/Israel and his sons and their families—about 70 in all—plus their flocks, carts, and everything they owned, settled in an area of the Nile Delta known as Goshen. In Genesis 47: 1–5, Joseph declared that it was the finest land in all of Egypt.

> 1 Joseph went and told Pharaoh, "My father and brothers, with their flocks and herds and everything they own, have come from the land of Canaan and are now in Goshen." 2 He chose five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh.
>
> 3 Pharaoh asked the brothers, "What is your occupation?" "Your servants are shepherds," they replied to Pharaoh, "just as our fathers were." 4 They also said to him, "We have come to live here for a while, because the famine is severe in Canaan and your servants' flocks have no pasture. So now, please let your servants settle in Goshen."
>
> 5 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you, 6 and the land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land. Let them live in Goshen. And if you know of any among them with special ability, put them in charge of my *own livestock."*

A New Pharaoh

After the death of Joseph, his brothers, and every member of the House of Jacob/Israel, Exodus chapter 1 tells us a new pharaoh came to the throne who "knew not Joseph," as detailed in Exodus 1:8–14:

> 8 Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. 9 "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. 10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."
>
> 11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites 13 and worked them ruthlessly. 14 They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

Ahmose I.

In light of this passage, it could be asked why there is any question at all about the identity of the pharaoh referenced here. The mere mention of cities that were being constructed by the Hebrew slaves—Pithom and Pi-Ramesses—would seem to indicate in the text the precise timing of the writing, as these two cities were built by Ramesses II in the mid-1200s BC. But as with nearly everything else we are encountering with this biblical story, nothing is as it appears on the surface.

According to the book of Exodus, the Hebrew slaves built the treasure cities of Pi-Ramesses and Pithom. That would place the Hebrews smack in the reign of Ramesses II (1279–1213 BC), who has been the main candidate for the pharaoh of the Exodus for centuries. However, due to other material we will present later in this book, the reign of Ramesses II is simply too late in the chronology of not only the biblical story, but for the kings of Egypt.

By recounting, in brief, the story of Joseph and his rise to power in Egypt, all we can do with certainty is establish that the biblical tale wants us to believe that these events were true. However, although no direct historical reference exists, there is indirect, secondary archaeological data that firmly establishes that the Genesis account was at the very least a plausible story.

We have to rid our minds of the storybook notions of these biblical tales. If we can gain the perspective that they were nothing more than elaborate retellings of commonplace events, then the stories become less mythic in proportion and more digestible as brief glances into an historical event.

That Joseph could be the 12th son of a Semitic tribal leader named Jacob/Israel is certainly not a stretch of the imagination. That he had a dysfunctional family with older brothers who were jealous of his status as a favored son and sold him to slave traders who took him to Egypt is certainly not out of the realm of possibility. That Joseph was elevated by the Pharaoh to the status of vizier, thus allowing him to be in charge of things when his family came knocking on the door, is viable. And that the family of Joseph was granted land in the Nile Delta region as relief from the famine in Canaan is congruent with known fact regarding Middle Eastern migration into the region. What cannot be established is whether or not the characters ever existed in real history or if they were part of a greater faith story manufactured simply to prod the faithful to remain so. Although it is wholly possible that a pre-Jewish book of faith can enlist historical fact, it is not always possible to prove the case beyond a shadow of a doubt.

CHAPTER FIVE

Were the Hebrew Slaves Ever *Really* Hebrew Slaves?

THE SENENMUT THREAD

The Hebrews had grown far too numerous. Over the last generation, the lush, fertile Nile Delta had become their permanent home. They had emigrated there seeking refuge from the bitter famine that overtook the Canaanite region, and now these "Asiatics" were here to stay. They were beginning to overpopulate the land that had been given to them by the vizier, Zaphnath Panaaeah, known to their people as Joseph, the younger son of their patriarch, Jacob, known as Israel.

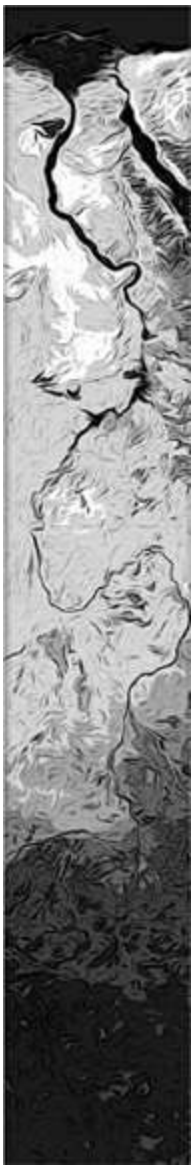
The eastern Nile Delta, where the Hebrews abandoned their nomadic ways, sinking their foreign feet into the most beautiful, lush part of the region known as Goshen, held some of the richest soil in all of Egypt. The pharaoh who had elevated Joseph to power as his vizier is the same pharaoh who had also given this land to the Hebrews. But he was not an Egyptian pharaoh at all. It is more than likely that he was one of the "Shepherd Kings,"[1] the *heqa khaseshet*— the Semitic race of Hyksos peoples[2] from Syria and Canaan who had migrated to and infiltrated Egypt in a similar fashion as did the Hebrews. Hyksos is the Greek translation of the Egyptian phrase *heqa khaseshet,* but there is newer etymology of the word *Hyksos* (from the Egyptian *hekw shasu*), meaning "Bedouin-like Shepherd Kings" rendered, simply, "rulers of/from foreign lands."[3]

Palm forest in the Nile Delta near Memphis.

Archaeologist Jacquetta Hawkes states of the Hyksos, “It is no longer thought that the Hyksos rulers...represent the invasion of a conquering horde of Asiatics...they were wandering groups of Semites who had long come to Egypt for trade and other peaceful purposes.”[4] Their usurpation of the throne of Egypt was a gradual affair as they worked their way into Egyptian politics and governmental affairs over generations. From migrating shepherds to Egyptian kings, the foreign nomadic Bedouins became rulers of the Nile Delta and all of Lower Egypt, while Egyptian pharaohs ruled from Thebes in the south of Upper Egypt.

Eventually the Hyksos went even further than simple migration, and by the 15th Dynasty of the Middle Kingdom (around 1700–1650 BC), they had wrested the ruling power of northern (Lower) Egypt from the Egyptians, and established and held that pharaonic throne until they were ousted at the beginning of the New Kingdom (around 1600–1550 BC) by Ahmose I, who had already been on the Theban throne in the south of (Upper) Egypt for some time before. Ahmose invaded to the north and drove Khamudi, the last of the Hyksos rulers, out of Mennefer and the entire Nile Delta region.

The Nile River flows south to north with tributaries north of current-day Cairo spreading into the Delta “fan” before emptying into the Mediterranean Sea. The terms “Upper” and “Lower” Egypt might seem backward, as Lower Egypt is in the north Delta region, and Upper Egypt is in the southern regions. This is dictated by the northerly flow of the Nile.



According to the biblical account of the Hebrew migration to Egypt under Joseph and the Hyksos pharaoh in Mennefer (Memphis), the Egyptians were none too fond of foreign, shepherding peoples, and Joseph expressly told his brothers to mention to the pharaoh that *they were shepherds*. This directly supports the fact that the sitting pharaoh at the time of Joseph is none other than a Hyksos ruler, one of the Shepherd Kings, the rulers of/from foreign lands.

The biblical passage of Genesis 46:31–34 gives clues to the nature of the pharaoh and the ruling class in Egypt at the time of the Joseph story, lending plausibility to the notion that the entire account of Joseph's time in Egypt and the migration of his father's clan from Canaan took place while a Hyksos

ruler sat on the throne of Egypt, placing it sometime during the 15th Dynasty. And it makes perfect, indirect, albeit plausible sense. The pharaoh who favored the shepherding people from Canaan, while the rest of the Egyptians detested them, is the one who grants the family of Jacob/Israel the "finest land in all of Egypt." After all, they are "his" people.

> 31 Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and speak to Pharaoh and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were living in the land of Canaan, have come to me. 32 The men are shepherds; they tend livestock, and they have brought along their flocks and herds and everything they own.' 33 When Pharaoh calls you in and asks, 'What is your occupation?' 34 you should answer, 'Your servants have tended livestock from our boyhood on, just as our fathers did.' Then you will be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen, ***for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians***." (Authors' emphasis)

It is no wonder that the new pharaoh mentioned in Exodus 1:8, Ahmose I (1550–1525 BC), had no regard for Joseph or the Hebrews, as they were sharp reminders of the foreign rule of the despised Shepherd Kings. It is also no wonder that he wanted to cull their population and control their influence by placing them under harsh administration and the imposition of enforced labor. He didn't want another "shepherding people" to have any possible foothold in the building of a new government or the usurpation of the Egyptian throne. This wasn't an act of cruelty, it was an act of pharaonic responsibility from the Egyptian perspective. He kept his friends close, and his enemies even closer and more controlled.

> 8 Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. 9 "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. 10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."
>
> —Exodus 1:8–10

The Mud Brick Capital of Egypt

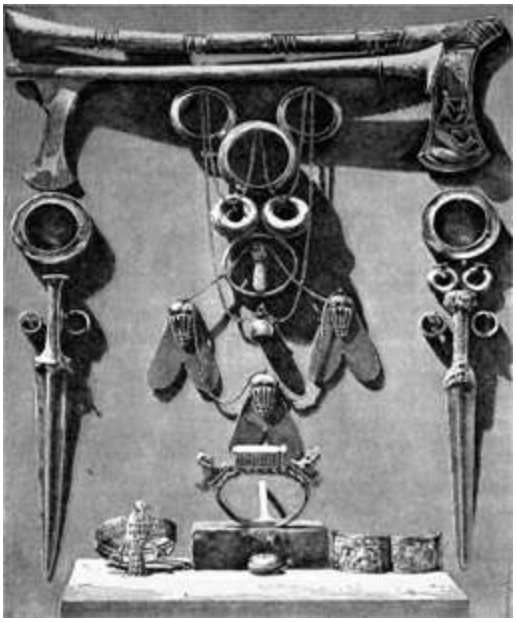
The moisture-laden green fields, humid air, and flowing canals whose banks were filled with the bull rushes and palm trees of the Delta were a welcomed respite for the Pharaoh and his family, who relocated there from Thebes during the hot summer months. Their royal residences in Mennefer on the Nile, renamed from the older city of Hutkaptah, were an annual delight in comparison to the burning sun and blowing sand of the dry, arid, sparkling

royal city of Thebes. The name *Mennefer* meant “enduring and beautiful” in the Egyptian tongue, which is why it was not only the capital of Egypt, but also the place where Theban pharaohs enjoyed respite at their summer palace. It was nearly a week’s journey north from Thebes to Mennefer, floating more than 400 miles with the northerly current of the Nile, which dispersed into the Delta and eventually emptied into the Mediterranean Sea. At least the trip to Mennefer was *with* the current, making the annual commute smooth and swift. Conversely, the journey back south against the river’s flow made their autumnal return to the city seem much longer and much more tedious.

Mennefer, also known as “The Good Place,” which eventually became known by its adulterated Greek name of *Memphis*, was an old and great city sprawling at the mouth of the Nile Delta, under the protection of its patron god, Ptah. It was originally named *Inebou Hedjou*, the city of “The White Walls,” built by Pharaoh Menes around 3000 BC along with the great temple of Hutkaptah, the “Enclosure of the Ka of Ptah.” Mennefer’s bustling port of Perunefer was thick with the noise and smells of industry, with workshops, factories, and warehouses lining the riverfront. Mennefer was the main distribution port for food all throughout the kingdom, whose cities, villages, and centers of population clung to the banks of the Nile from Nubia to the Mediterranean. Although stone was ported up from places such as Gebel el Silsila, Mennefer was considered to be the capital of mud brick making; boatloads of sun-dried, Delta mud brick shipped out every day to the numerous building projects up and down the river.

Memphis—the ancient city of Mennefer—as it appears today.

From both his palace in Thebes and his summer palace in Mennefer, Pharaoh Ahmose I (also known as Ahmoses I, Amenes, Aahmes, and Nebpehtyra), reigned from 1550 BC to 1525 BC, according to the Oxford Chronology of Egyptian Kings. Egyptologist and author David Rohl suggested a new chronology that would place Ahmose I's reign from 1194 BC to 1170 BC,[5] but this has been rejected by the majority of Egyptologists even prior to the release of radiocarbon dating released by the journal *Science* in 2010.[6] Ahmose I completed the defeat and expulsion of the Hyksos and re-unified Upper and Lower Egypt, becoming the absolute ruler of Egypt. By ousting the Hyksos, he reestablished Theban rule and reasserted Egyptian power in the formerly subjugated regions of Nubia and Canaan. And he set about sweeping all remnants of the presence of the repugnant Hyksos from Mennefer.



The jewelry and ceremonial axes found in the tomb of Queen Ahotep, mother of Ahmose I. The axe head depicts Ahmose I slaying a Hyksos soldier, and the golden "flies" commemorate his mother's supportive role against the Hyksos.

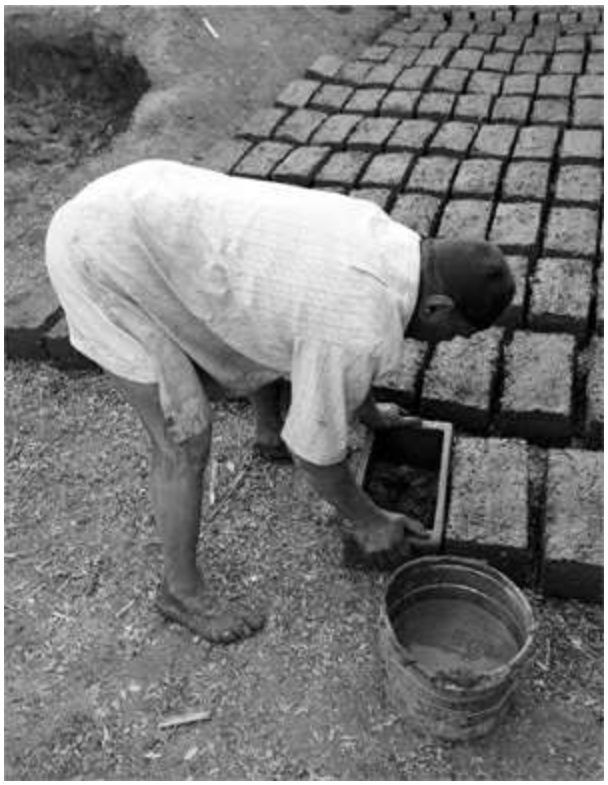
So, the Hebrew people, who had come to Egypt several generations past to avoid the harsh famine in Canaan, found a new homeland, given to them by the Hyksos pharaoh. But now they were nothing more than a despised people who bore the guilt of association and benefit at the hands of the invading Hyksos Shepherd Kings. It was not a good time to be living in Egypt for these nomadic emigrants from Syria and Canaan; the new pharaoh,

Ahmose I, saw them as a blight and feared that because they had grown so exponentially they would be a force to be reckoned with if not subdued immediately. So in great administrative reorganizations, Ahmose cleansed Egypt of the Hyksos influence and began massive new building campaigns to reconstruct Egypt in a new glory. He reopened the quarries that had lain stagnant for generations and opened up the mining in the Sinai, reestablishing the trade routes throughout Egypt, and improving the grand canal of the Pharaohs stretching east along the Wadi Tumilat down through Lake Timsah and the Great Bitter Lake to the Sea of Reeds, across the northern tip of the Red Sea and into the Sinai desert. Ahmose forcibly breathed the air of Egypt back into the lungs of the Nile Delta. Not only had he driven out the usurpers, but he would be the pharaoh known for building an even greater Egypt than had existed before. But all of this required the living, breathing, pulsing technological machinery of his day: the blood, sweat, and tears of a human workforce.

Not only did Ahmose I incorporate the talents and raw loyalty of his Egyptian craftsmen and workers, but he also found it in the Hebrews and other Asiatic peoples dwelling in the Delta region—a sizeable workforce of which he took great advantage.[7] As previously described, there was no love for the Hebrews and other Semitic peoples living in the Delta, and Ahmose I and his successors imposed harsh labor on them, forcing them into servitude, pressing them into work camps in the quarries along the Nile and the copper and turquoise mines in the mountains of the western Sinai wilderness.

Semitic workers making mud brick from the walls of the Tomb of Rekhmire, Tombs of the Nobles, Luxor, Egypt.

Nearly a century later, Pharaoh Thutmoses III was still utilizing Semitic peoples as a workforce. Rekhmire, vizier to Thutmoses III, and subsequently to his son, Amenhotep II, left behind beautifully detailed paintings on the walls of his tomb among the Tombs of the Nobles in Thebes (current-day Luxor) depicting Semitic workers making mud brick and carving blocks. The accompanying hieroglyphic text reads: “He supplies us with bread, beer, and every good thing,” while the Egyptian task master is saying, “The rod is in my hand; be not idle!”[8]



A modern-day mud brick maker in the village of el Kom, outside Luxor, Egypt.

Although it has been well established by Egyptologists throughout the last 200 years that much of the construction work carried out in ancient Egypt was by communities of indigenous workers whose entire lives were dedicated to the glory of their pharaohs,[9] in the New Kingdom, we see a shift in workforce to that of pressing the *foreign* inhabitants of the land into enforced servitude. And it seems apparent that the offspring of those foreign workers were simply born into a veritable slave caste, proliferating the exponential population of the forced laborers. There are also many references to prisoners of war being hauled back to Egypt from foreign campaigns in Nubia, Syria, and Canaan, where soldiers and other inhabitants are brought to Egypt for the express purpose of pressing them into forced slave labor.

The big question is: Are any of these foreign-blooded slaves *Hebrews*? Are they the descendants of the family of Jacob that were given fertile land in the Delta region under the rule of foreign kings who had usurped the northern throne of Egypt? Although there is no direct evidence of Jacob's clan and descendants, I think we have, via secondary archaeological evidence, established that this possibility flies off the top of the plausibility scale. And in a nation that didn't give a lot of attention to the particulars of whom they

considered as enemies of the state (other than to mention them by regional affiliation and origins, such as the term *Asiatics* so profoundly demonstrates), they did not separate them out by family clan names, such as "the children of Jacob/Israel." And if they ever did, those records are lost to antiquity. But now, it seems highly improbable that any pharaoh or scribe would have called out the Hebrews; the descended family tree of a migrated group of Canaanite tribesmen by their family name of Israel was simply never recorded. And if Joseph and his father's clan and his brothers were given the land in the Delta, those records, if they ever existed on papyri, are simply lost to the humid, flooding climate of the Nile Delta.

Is the Bible a Reliable Historical Source?

The questions of a Hebrew presence has to solidly rest on whether or not the books of Genesis, Exodus, Levticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—the writings of Moses known as the Pentateuch, the Jewish Torah—can be accepted as historical documents, or at the very least, while being books of faith, present facts that can be established through plausible secondary archaeology. We have hit hard on this point already, but it is worth reminding ourselves again, right here, that just because an ancient document is "spiritual" or "religious" in nature, that should not preclude its contents from being considered as reliable history. But the proof is in the pudding, as the ubiquitous "they" contend. Establishing historical plausibility is then the primary means in establishing biblical authenticity of record.

American scholars William Albright and John Bright contended that the biblical record is reliable in its historical presentations. When coupled with secondary historical data, it gives us a very authentic picture of Hebrew history. In *A History of Israel* (1959), John Bright, a student of Albright's, maintained this biblical authenticity. In the third edition of his book in 1981, he stated emphatically from a faith-based position: "There can really be little doubt that ancestors of Israel had been slaves in Egypt and had escaped in some marvelous way. Almost no one today would question it."[10]

So what do you do when faith runs headlong into science? This is the ever-present debate that exists in every field of scientific study. Do we accept *carte blanche* the teachings in a book of faith? Or must we balance those teachings against what we know by research and scientific study? I think we all know the answer is in the latter. Acceptance by faith is a matter of heart

and belief, whereas the examination of fact must be applied. A scholarly seminarian professor friend of mine once said, “Remember, in all of your historical research, you cannot forget to maintain the Bible as your filter.” This is good advice from a seminary professor, but it is clearly a statement of *faith.* Using the Bible as your only means of filtering historical data can lead to a dangerous end and sometimes to unfounded conclusions—no matter what you wish to be true or what aligns with your religious beliefs.

Scotty on his first ferry across the Nile from the west to east bank of Luxor (ancient Thebes) with Luxor Temple in the background.

In Luxor, Egypt, this last January, the authors were at dinner with a Muslim friend (we will call him *Sayad* to hide his identity). The topic of this book came up for discussion at the table, and we all had a sincere, frank dialog. In the discussion, Sayad, a business owner and overall intelligent man, asked questions and posited theories. But when it came to the bottom line, he raised his hands calmly and said, “The Holy Quran says it is so, and that is then fact.” We respectfully asked him how he would react if he learned that historical data contradicted or even controverted the writings in his holy book. He simply raised his eyebrows and in a sincere, friendly smile repeated his previous statement, to the word. We agreed that we respected his faith and would push the issue no further in that conversation.

But herein lays the problem with matters of faith: When seeking answers to historical mysteries and questions, we are not seeking *truth*. We are seeking *fact.* No matter what our faith may tell us, we must defer to available facts and data. This does not mean that there are not more things to discover on any given matter, but that when researching, all biases must be left at the door. For instance, in searching for facts that may establish the biblical

record, the faith issue must be checked and balanced against historical data, and if the established, grounded data is in conflict with scripture, it must be concluded that the scripture is either completely wrong, or there are explanations and more data to be found. This is not an abandonment of faith and belief; it is a suspension of religiously held dogma in order to take an objective view of researched, uncovered data.

Conversely, the same must be said for science and academia. Simply because historical data already exists ought not to preclude the filter of religious work, as they represent a body of history all on their own. Any previously held acceptance of archaeological data, if contradicted or even controverted by faith-based data, must be open to the possibility that there may be more to the research than what meets the eye with black-and-white facts. It is the *modus operandi* of the academic community to label any faith-based argument that cannot be established by cold, hard fact as "wrong." In a real sense, academicians can be as "religious" as those who operate by faith alone.

Agendas and preciously held belief systems must be left behind when researching for factual data. This does not mean they ought to be abandoned, for many discoveries are driven by the desire to either substantiate or disintegrate theoretical or faith-based claims. The key is to not be beholden to one or the other. A researcher simply has to be a researcher, even when it comes to the story of Moses and the Exodus, a thematical theory based on the books of three of the world's major religions. The notion is that there is something to those stories as contained in those books—hence the two centuries of repeated quests of discovery into the topic. But neither academia nor faith should drive the search for fact. Academic positioning comes with the evidential proof, whereas faith needs no proof at all to substantiate what it believes.

Scandinavian minimalist Niels Peter Lemche states, "The silence in the Egyptian sources as to the presence of Israel in the country (is) an obstacle to the notion of Israel's 40 years sojourn."[11]

American scholar Bernard Batto said, "The biblical narrative in the books of Genesis through Joshua owes more to the folkloristic tradition of the ancient Near East than to the historical genre."[12]

There is always presupposition brought to the table. The biblical scholars presuppose the scriptural tales are real history, while the academics

presuppose they simply never really happened, but are part of folkloric tradition.

What we give you in these pages is a mix of the two. We cannot state emphatically that the faith story never happened, but we must adhere to current academic discovery, even if it contradicts issues of faith.

So, 72 Rabbis and a Pharaoh Walk Into a Room

When Alexander the Great died in 323 BC, having "no more worlds to conquer," he left the world in a very Hellenized state, in which the universal language of commerce was Koine Greek, the same language with which most of the biblical New Testament is written. As legend tells, the Macedonian Pharaoh of Egypt, Ptolemy II (309–246 BC), sponsored the translation of the Jewish Torah and related texts from biblical Hebrew into Greek for inclusion in the Library of Alexandria. The translation took place in several stages over many years, but the result was to give us the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament that is the basis for the Old Latin, Slavonic, Syriac, Old Armenian, Old Georgian, and Coptic versions of the Christian Old Testament.[13] After the Torah, other books were translated throughout the next two to three centuries, but it is not even clear which book was translated when, or where that translation took place. There is even some evidence that some of the books included may have been translated more than once (into distinctly different versions), and then revised again from that point.[14]

> King Ptolemy once gathered 72 Elders. He placed them in 72 chambers, each of them in a separate one, without revealing to them why they were summoned. He entered each one's room and said: 'Write for me the Torah of Moshe, your teacher.' God put it in the heart of each one to translate identically as all the others did.[15]

One of the problems encountered with the Septuagint is that the quality and style of the different translators varied considerably from book to book, sometime offering up a literal translation, then sometimes jumping from paraphrasing to outright interpretative.[16] This has caused many scholars to see the Septuagint as a work of not simply re-recording ancient Hebrew scripture, but of "rewriting" certain texts to support the national identity of Israel and appeal to the faithful adherents of Judaism.

It is from this Greek translation of the Old Testament that we have most of our current English version. Hebrew manuscripts still exist, but not in their

original form. And it is this repeated translation of the Old Testament that has left us with questions as to authenticity and veracity to the original documents—if they existed at all.

An artist's rendition of how the Library of Alexandria would have appeared in the time of Ptolemy II.

And, by the way, the legend doesn't deal with the Septuagint itself, as we have copies of this document and many other forms. The legend is focused on whether or not it was Ptolemy II's invite, or the 72 rabbis simply came begging on the doorstep of the Library of Alexandria, and were granted permission.

The skeptical/atheistic community's periodical *Free Inquiry* takes the stance that none of it every really happened at all, and it was completely fabricated.[17]

So, in reality we have no real substantive proof of what Moses penned in his original books. Further, we have no hard evidence as to whether Moses even lived. According to the "true scientists," we need to approach the notion of there being an historical Moses and an equally historical event known as the Great Exodus as if he never really existed in the first place. The absence of any direct evidence of existence, they will tell you, is the absence of existence. The biblical record is not direct historical evidence as it is a book of faith, and absent any historical record, there is, they conclude, no Moses.

He is a figment of Jewish fiction, an element of Canaanite folklore. But, then again, so are Joseph, Jacob, the Hebrews, and all of the fanciful notions of Egyptian bondage, miraculous deliverance, and the conquest of the land of Canaan.

A sample of name erasure from a lintel above a spios on the banks of the Nile at the West Bank of the Quarries of Gebel el Silsila.

But all of this presupposes that the Bible and the writings traditionally held to be those of Moses have no real historical value. And as a result, you should, if you are a critical thinker of any sort, continually ask yourself why academia and science so discount the biblical record as having no historical value and no archaeological merit.

Nelson Glueck, a noted 20th-century Jewish archeologist whose work in biblical archaeology led to the discovery of more than 1,500 ancient sites, put it this way: “It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a single biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible.”[18]

Not surprisingly—as some think of the biblical record as being inaccurate and rife with faith stories alone—when stacked up against non-biblical accounts of historical events, the scriptural narratives reveal unflinching veracity.[19]

Here is something to consider: Perhaps Moses, in accordance with our contention that he was thoroughly Egyptian, despite being born of Hebrew blood, simply wrote the book of Exodus in a very Egyptian style. He didn’t

omit the names of the pharaohs because he was creating some sort of fiction, he left them out as to *not give them life.* In the ancient Egyptian way of thinking, the Life Eternal and the Resurrection in the Afterlife was achieved through the recording of the name for all eternity to witness. By deliberately leaving their names out of the book, perhaps Moses, in his own way, was writing them out of history.

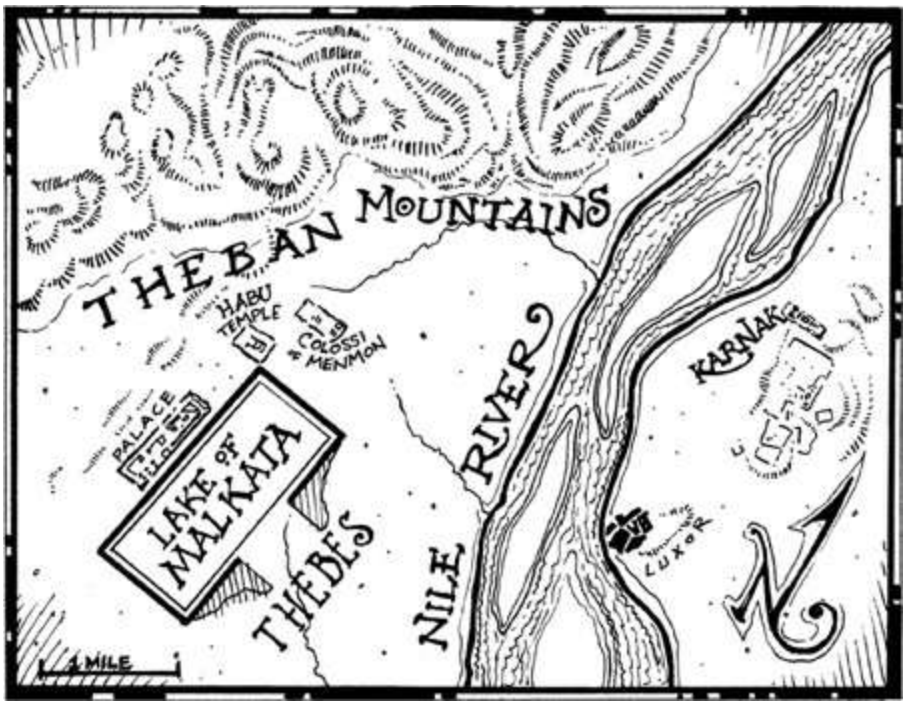
CHAPTER SIX

Victims of Circumstance

THE HAPU THREAD

In the new light of day, one can only begin to imagine what the devastation must have been like and the effects it would have had upon the remaining population, the river having reclaimed its natural course and flood plains, washing away the debris and the remains of what was once Thebes. The sheer amount of dead, missing, and dying would have been far too much for what little infrastructure remained within this ancient society. The temples and its priests were unable to offer the help or assistance required due to their own desperation and inability to deal with such a catastrophe. This only added to the despair of the people; what was once a thriving community with clear lines of demarcation and structure now lay in tatters and chaos.

One could draw upon a contemporary experience, as many of us witnessed the devastating effects of a tsunami as it struck off the coast of Japan in 2011, the tsunami that hit Thailand in 2001, and the devastating hurricanes that annually hit landfall on America's east coast. All of these natural catastrophes are being beamed around the planet instantaneously for millions to watch and respond to, with huge acts of generosity and kindness from the safety of our armchairs. As for ancient Thebes, she had only herself to fall back on; there were no international rescue crews dispatched to her aid, there was no United Nations relief, no mobile tents or other modern military equipment to save those who survived and provide the necessary shelter. For us, it is hard to imagine the consequences of not having such a well-equipped accident and emergency body or a FEMA organization that can deal with such global crisis. For the Thebans, they had only themselves.



Ancient Thebes and the enormous Sacred Lake built by Amenhotep III.

The heat of the midday Egyptian sun in July usually goes well into the 100s. Combined with the lack of adequate shelter and supplies, those injured or suffering the effects of the flood would have soon become victims of circumstance, and the unbearable heat would have helped add to the death toll. The frail and young would be among the first succumbing to its effects, then after a few short days the water-borne diseases and pestilence would only add to the insurmountable problems that the survivors would have to deal with. Those who were injured would have succumbed to the unsanitary living conditions, increasing their chances of infections to their wounds, and subsequently hampering any healing process, but ultimately bringing death.

The tempest heat of Egypt is also a breeding ground for mosquitoes, flies, and other infection-spreading insects, all of which would have multiplied in the aftermath, feeding upon those who lay decomposing in the sun and the individuals who had no shelter from their now uninhabitable environment. Malaria and other blood-transported diseases rapidly spread among the survivors[1], hampering any rescue operations and other associated tasks of survival. Within a short while the temple corridors would be teeming with those unable to deal with their illnesses. For sure I paint a pretty gloomy picture; however, given the state of rudimentary housing and limited infrastructure available to the Theban population at that time, it is reasonable

to suggest such horrific and depressing details.

Either funeral pyres or mass graves would have been the only option available to the remaining Thebans.

As for the dead, there would be no time for the obligatory 70 days of laying in a bath of natron or the customary mummification process to be granted to all who had died that day.[2] The tombs took far too long to excavate and the workshops that usually dealt with this matter were already full with the injured and dying. Either funeral pyres or mass graves would have been the only option available to the remaining Thebans. Given the option of committing the bodies to the Nile would have been abhorrent to the survivors, and given the nature of their death and the devastation that had been inflicted upon them, this would not have even been considered. The desert floor would prove to be an ideal location, but the ground would have taken days to dig through, and with the rise in epidemics, other diseases, and incessant harassment from the local animal population, the funeral pyres would have been an effective way of disposing the decomposing bodies.

Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage

I would like to draw your attention at this point to the “Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage”[3] an ancient Egyptian papyrus that possibly dates to around the 18th or 19th Dynasty. Currently there is only one original copy, located in

Leiden University, and it is known as Papyrus Leiden 344. It has unfortunately suffered considerable damage during its lifetime, which has left some significant gaping holes within its narrative, but also toward the characters to which it pertains. The original does not mention the name of the Pharaoh or a date, and the final outcome of the story is also unknown due to missing verses. However, the content of the papyrus holds certain key elements that directly pertain to the unfolding events that I have suggested and include the aftermath of such a scenario. Also, there are clear associations with the contents of Spell 125[4] from the Book of Going Forth or more commonly known as the Book of the Dead, which have many associations with the biblical Ten Commandments that were handed down to Moses by the writing of God on the Holy Mount. We will deal with these texts later in the book.

So, if I may draw your attention to Appendix A and the "Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage," lines 46 and 47 speak of the Nile overflowing and the land becoming unusable and its fate unsure. If the embankments to the west that protected the agricultural fields during the flood season were in fact broken, as I have suggested, then the land would become unsuitable, and there would be a shortage of harvestable crop and sustainable food supplies for the cattle and other livestock throughout that season. Please remember that the banks of the River Nile to both Upper and Lower Egypt are extremely flat, and in most places lie beneath the flood levels. These embankments, especially on the boundaries of the cities, would have allowed the continued planting and tilling of the arable land, irrigated by the very successful and naturally fed canals, which also acted as routes of transportation, communication, and military applications.

Water Damage

Various archaeological projects throughout the years have carried out investigations to determine the exact location of these ancient canals and how they fed one another, but more importantly how they would have been navigated during the flood season. In addition, further investigations were needed to explore the removal of the buildup of silt and accumulated rubbish, which would have been necessary to aid the continued use of them as a strategic waterway system, serving the entire city and its society.[5] Without these canals, the east and west banks would be cut off from one another

during the flood season, effectively reducing the capacity to rule and govern the populace. Thebes relied heavily on these canals for the reasons I have presented, and they would have been invaluable during the crisis, helping with the transportation of supplies and ferrying the injured and dead to and from their respective areas. And given the devastation inflicted upon the fleet of cargo ships and other small boats moored at the harbors of Thebes, the canals would have been navigated by much smaller vessels (nothing more than rafts really), but capable of completing the tasks at hand.

Again, I refer to the Admonitions, this time lines 54 to 65, which refer to the river as a place of entombment and that blood is everywhere. I of course relate this to the immediate aftermath of the event where pools of blood began to gather, and the rivers increased in height, washing the floating bodies northward away from Thebes. Look at the similarities between lines 54 through 65 and the biblical narrative of the first plague:

> “Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage” lines 54–65:
>
> Verily, the heart is horrified,
> For affliction pervades the land,
> Blood is everywhere,
> There is no end of death,
> And the death-shroud summons,
> Though one’s time has not yet come.
> Verily, countless corpses are entombed in the river;
> The waters are a tomb, and the place of embalming is the river.
> Verily, the Nobles are in lamentation, while the paupers are in glee,
> And every city says, “Let us drive out the mighty from our midst.”
> Verily, the people are like Ibises, for filth pervades the land,
> And there are none at all in our time whose garments are white.

> Exodus 7:19:
>
> Then the Lord spoke with Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and vessels of stone.’”[6]

Is it coincidence that the ancient texts and biblical narrative talk of one

and the same? The source or origin of the “Admonitions” has been speculated for many years by various academics and educational institutions alike. Some suggest a reference to early dynastic problems within Egypt, and that the inclusion of poetic narrative throughout the ensuing years has led to the final copy that we posses today, painting a more dramatic picture than that which was intended in the beginning. Whatever the origin, there are unmistakable correlations between the scenario of the apocalyptic disaster, the biblical narrative of Exodus, and other historical events that have taken place in Egypt’s vast ancient history.

What could Pharaoh or his political court of nobles have done to prevent such a disaster? Could they have prevented it? Could it have been avoided? These questions can never really be answered, but the effects of such an apocalyptic rage and its subsequent aftermath can be. Given the size and popularity of Thebes during the 18th Dynasty, it is fair to speculate that the population was as diverse as it was in number. Such a terrible set of circumstances would have brought many of the survivors together within specific groups. But most likely, the royal house would have remained singled out among them because of its high-ranking position within the overall community. Would Pharaoh be the vent of the peoples’ anger, as they looked to him as the personification of God on earth—the very same God that was supposed to save them from such terrible evils and prevent chaos from reigning down upon them? Given the amount of protection Pharaoh would have had at any given moment, I doubt that the remnants of the hardcore commoners railed as an angry mob against him or his family; rather, a political or religious banishment may have occurred in such a series of events. However, this does not rule out the possibility of small skirmishes that were directed at the royal house.

The ancient workers' city was washed away and its heart was hollowed out.

When Class Gets Washed Away

The ancient Egyptian society was not exactly a complex structure; rather, the class system was very much adhered to, each man and woman knowing their place within the community and their responsibilities to the overall religious foundation that oversaw the smooth running of the state. Their children followed in the footsteps of their fathers, entering their respective trades and professions. It was this class system that would have played an important role in the initial days after the disaster. Groups of well-defined class status, religious belief, and skill sets would have begun to emerge within the depressed community, each having their respective leaders. These groups may have been responsible for the historical events that I suggest might have followed this catastrophe, which we will explore later.

As the days passed, the dead and dying would become one as the Underworld surfaced within Thebes. As the last of their personal reserves dwindled away, people would begin searching for other supplies, unable to feed themselves or the injured who had survived the disaster. Eventually, due to personal responsibilities, the fit would be unable to offer support or medical assistance to those who were wounded, and the sick would eventually join those who lost their lives in the initial wave of destruction. Law and order would have broken down; vigilante groups would soon form, protecting what little reserves of supplies they had left. Marauding gangs of thieves and looters would take over the land, stealing and pillaging what they

could find among the remains. It would be fair to say that the neighboring cities would have offered assistance to Thebes. The established trade routes would have made easy pickings for those who hid and ambushed the support and aid that filtered along its dusty paths. The Medjay army and the judicial court system would be unable to cope with the increased criminal activity, forcing the law-enforcement bodies to carry out lethal punishment to those found breaking the law. Line 42 of the Admonitions speaks of the archers being ordered and that evil has spread everywhere.

The empty graneries stand behind the colossal ruins of the Ramesseum in Luxor.

The priests would have been an easy target, with their granary stores and other associated food stock piles; even though both Ipet-resyt (Luxor) and Ipet-isut (Karnak) had been decimated by the flood, there would have been areas unaffected by the waters. The towering massive stone buildings would have supported the community after the crisis; a hierarchy would have developed within the sacred walls, and people would have sought them out for shelter. Another option would have been the tombs secreted in the Theban Mountains, offering a respite from the harsh rays of Ra, but most importantly they were secure and could be defended in times of need.

The army and the Pharaoh's own Medjay would be unable to police or contain the civil unrest as the days of horror turned into weeks of pain and misery. Neighboring cities such as Dendera, Hierakonpolis, and Medamud would have been overwhelmed by the survivors as they expanded their search for food and shelter. The displacement would have been nothing less than an Exodus to a certain extent (excuse the pun here). But again, I draw upon historical comparable material, where history shows us that people will do almost anything to safeguard their families and provide the basic form of

necessities to aid their survival. In times of need, mass migration in any given direction in search of shelter and food is usually the result of a breakdown within the society in which they usually reside. These migrations only add to the turmoil and place extreme stresses upon neighboring communities and their own resources. Unable to cope with the amount of people, these smaller districts ultimately end up joining the migration in search for further food and sustainable resources.

Livestock that survived would be scrambling for the little vegetation that endured the waters. Although the diminished livestock would now be limited to the higher grounds that skirted the desert's edge, foraging for what little it could find, it, too, would become susceptible to the contaminated water supply, bringing about certain bovine diseases that could be transmitted from beast to man. Blow flies, ticks, mange, and other ailments that afflicted livestock would be heightened by their situation, compounded and worsened to the extreme. Flies and mosquitoes would transport chronic gastrointestinal illness and blood-borne diseases that would rapidly spread among those foraging for the meager pickings. Soon, Thebes would become an open-air cemetery, the land of the dead, in more than just words and metaphor. Of course, the most important commodity, water, would be the hardest to come by. The amount of pollution in the pools and waterways that ran through the remains of Thebes would have been so badly contaminated that it would have been deadly to drink due to the microscopic evils that would wreak havoc once ingested, and most certainly bring death upon its drinkers.

We must pause for a moment and ask ourselves how the royal palace kept its occupants hydrated during such a time. One could suggest that the waters up-river were clean and free of the debris and aftermath that contaminated the waters below. It might also be plausible that an ongoing supply of fresh drinking water was ferried into Thebes via the river by smaller vessels and by land across the higher desert ground.

As we have discussed, the breakdown in the class structure would have led to immeasurable chaos running through what was left. But what about the aristocratic families and their inability (through upbringing) to cope with such a calamity? Having lived such a pampered life, surrounded by servants and serfs alike, it is difficult to ascertain whether they would have survived the first couple of weeks having to fend for themselves. Their splendid villas perched high up on the desert plain, with their ornamental gardens, planted orchards, and central ponds, would have been one of the first vestiges of

those who sought shelter and security. Their homes overrun with commoners, I find it hard to accept that they would have opened their doors freely and willingly. I would suggest that most would have sought the safety of the royal palace and that of the Medjay. However, even the royal palace could not retain the sufficient supplies and provisions to sustain such a large amount of people behind its closed and reinforced doors. Again, we can read certain verses within “Admonitions” that pertain directly to this predicament, in which it states that the nobles who once slept in beds now slept upon the floor and those who had no beds now slept within the mansions. An ironic rags to riches tale, to say the least.

Though the first couple of weeks after the catastrophe would have formed specific groups, which probably facilitated the overall survival of their members, Thebes still fell quickly into lawlessness and chaos. Further into the book I discuss the emergence of the four main groups, which I believe are the basis for the biblical Exodus story.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Senenmut

THE SENENMUT THREAD

Ra took the form of a pink, blazing ball rising heavily in the east, the humid air bending his shafts, dappling the high trunks of the palm forest with an odd blend of gold and pink. The foliage was a blaze of yellow and warm green, the colors saturated by the moisture in the air, and dew-laden palm fronds hung low before the mud brick houses of Goshen as the soldiers approached. The morning's dew was thick and the ground was wet, as if there had been rain throughout the night, but the skies were clear and there was no sign of rain to come. The earth here in the Nile Delta seemed to water itself and all the world was lush and green. As the sun cleared the horizon, the soldiers of Pharaoh had already begun their house-to-house canvas.

The mandate was clear, and despite the unpleasant nature of the task at hand it had to be obeyed to the letter. Gathering small children and sacrificing them to Sobek in the waters of the Nile was a damned bloody affair, but everyone understood why it needed to be done. And these children were, after all, only the offspring of a subdued, enslaved people who—if they could—would join forces with other foreigners and overthrow Thutmoses I, the Pharaoh of the recently reunited Upper and Lower Egypt.

It was Thutmoses I's grandfather, Ahmose I, who had cleared this region of the foul Hyksos people and placed into forced labor those who were defeated and had not fled the country. Now their grandsons and granddaughters were born to the task of building Pharaoh's cities and making the mud brick that was distributed throughout the region and the rest of Egypt.

As the genocidal edict was carried out, the cries of babes and the mournful wailing of mothers was heard throughout the streets and pathways, echoing off the walls of the houses of the Hebrews. Had not they served the Pharaoh well? Why would he bring such devastation upon their families? Had not the children of Jacob borne the weight of building Egypt upon their backs? And now their reward was the stealing and murder of their children! The Pharaoh's edict was detailed in Exodus 1:22: "Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."

You can clearly imagine these Israelite mothers, crying out to their Egyptian gods: *"Oh, Mistress of the West, hear our cry! Oh, joyous Hathor, Great Mother! Receive our children as they fly to you for refuge from this life! Oh, great 'I Am,' deliver us from this sorrow! Turn the face of Pharaoh away from his seething anger with us and save our children from generation to generation!"*

A Precedent for Tyranny?

Without question, any official royal edict ordering the murder of innocent children is the act of a tyrant. So, what sort of man would commit such atrocity? And is there any historical precedent in Egyptian history for such an act of inhumanity?

One of the elements of the Moses story told in the book of Exodus is the detail surrounding his birth. According to the scriptural account, the Pharaoh is concerned about the population of the Hebrews, in that they "have grown too numerous." So he issues an edict that all the baby boys should be thrown into the Nile River and drowned. The big questions are these: What would drive a monarch to order such a thing? Was it enforced by his soldiers, or was this something that he put out there as a public proclamation to be carried out by all Egyptians? Is there any archaeological data that might confirm any pharaoh doing such a thing? Is this simply the first of many pogroms invoked against the Hebrews, as understood through a Jewish perspective? (Well, at least in this case, the Children of Israel, as Judaism, per say, did not exist at this time in their history.)

By way of historical comparison, we can look to the mandates carried out by the English king in Scotland after the famous Battle of Culloden Moor in 1746. Bonnie Prince Charlie, as he was called, was the rightful heir to the

throne of Scotland, and he had gathered thousands of Highland men and raised an army to defend his claim. On April 16, 1746, Charlie and his Highland Army met the superior forces of Lord Cumberland in a decisive, open battle on the moors of Culloden outside Inverness, Scotland.

The Battle of Culloden Moor by David Morier, 1746.

The Highlanders were utterly defeated, and the Highland clan system was forever eradicated in Scotland as a political, governing force. In the months that followed, King George instituted the "Highland Clearances": On penalty of death, the Highland Scots could not speak their Gaelic language, wear the tartan or kilt, or stay in their homes. They were all cleared out of the Highlands, resulting in the slaughter of innocents, families, and children. As a result, Highlanders were given the option of conscripting to the King's armies or, in many cases, death by sword or at the end of a rope. This resulted in the forming of the Scottish regiments in the British army and eventually led to the resurgence of a more romanticized notion of the Scottish Highlander during the Victorian period. But the original mandate of clearance and death, though heinously conceived, was at the core.

Although it is not perfect as a demonstrative illustration, the plight of the Highland Scots is a similar historical reference to a civilized monarch issuing very uncivilized edicts for "the good of his people," or at least the good of his political aims.

Could Thutmoses I have been in a similar situation when he issued a mandate based on his perception of what might be the best for his people?

Was the killing of children necessary to maintain his kingdom and ensure its prolonged safety? As mentioned previously, it was Thutmoses's grandfather who, in the last 10 years of his reign, completely cleared out the Hyksos peoples and bound the living remnant into forced labor and slavery. Now, the enslaved people were growing in numbers. Nearly two generations later, their exponential breeding had unwittingly put them in harm's way, as the pharaoh saw them as a potential rising threat. Take another look at the biblical passage that details all of this and keep in mind that the scripture does not delineate between successive pharaohs. On the following pages you will see passages from Exodus 1:1–22 detailing the deeds of multiple pharaohs, despite the text making no delineation nor mention of their names:

> 1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; 3 Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; 4 Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. 5 The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt.
>
> 6 Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, 7 but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.

This is during the period of the Hyksos rule over Lower Egypt from their capitol city of Mennefer (Memphis). Joseph had risen to great power as a vizier beneath one of the Hyksos rulers, and he brought his family to Egypt from Canaan and emphasized their shepherding ways, resulting in the Hyksos pharaoh granting them "the best land in all of Egypt" in the region of Goshen in the Nile Delta, east of present-day Cairo.

Scotty emerges from a hillside filled with unexcavated ruins in current-day Memphis. If you look closely, you can see the form of mud bricks in the "melted" ancient mud.

And Joseph's people, the clan of Israel, multiplied over the next generations, "filling the land" with their family blood. The Hebrews proliferated throughout the region and were obvious blood allies to the Hyksos king, who was also of "Asiatic" descent.

> 8 Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.

This is obviously none other than Ahmose I, who rose to power in the south on the Theban throne and reclaimed northern Egypt by repeatedly attacking and breaking the Hyksos hold on Lower Egypt and the Nile Delta. The biblical text says—depending on which translation you read—that this pharaoh rose to power and "knew not Joseph," or better interpreted as, "he couldn't have cared less about who Joseph had been, as he was a political appointee of a ruler whom he believed to be an invading, illegitimate usurper." So he wiped them out and reclaimed the throne of Lower Egypt, reuniting the kingdoms under his rule.

> 9 "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. 10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."

So Ahmose imposed slavery over the remnants of the Hyksos as well as

any other Asiatics who may have aligned with them on the basis of heredity or heritage. The Hyksos were, after all, from the Syrian and Canaanite region, the homeland of the family of Israel, to whom he had granted much favor. This family of Hebrews, then, became a problem for the conquering Theban pharaoh from the south. He saw them as a blight, as foreigners, and as a people who, because of their blood ties to the Hyksos rulers, would be first in line to sign on for any fight to reclaim the Memphite throne. He needed to nip this potential military/political issue in the bud.

> 11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.

The issue of the cities of Pithom and Ramesses have been a problem in the dating of the entire story. As mentioned earlier, these were cities that did not exist by those names until after the reign of Ramesses II, who did not come to the throne for nearly 200 more years after the events of the Exodus. But it was Ramesses who *re-built* these older cities, which were known by different names when the Hebrews lived there, centuries before he ascended to the throne of Egypt. The later writers, re-writers, and scribal editors of the original book of Exodus merely updated those city names with what would have been recognized by the populace reading the book in their day, 1,000 years later. It would be as if I was writing about the mid-19th century Minnesota village named after the infamous bootlegger, Pierre “Pig’s Eye” Parrant. Very few people would know of the little town named Pig’s Eye, Minnesota, but they would most certainly recognize the same town by its later name of St. Paul, the capital of the state of Minnesota.

Pithom and Ramesses—or Pi-Ramesses—were the later names of the cities built and revitalized under Ahmose I, who incorporated the slave labor of the northern Hyksos people he had just conquered. Ahmose I was a voracious builder at Avaris (later known as Pi-Ramesses), with visions of establishing this city as a possible commercial center in the north. He also left a pyramid with his cenotaph (memorial as opposed to tomb) at Abydos.[1]

> 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites 13 and worked them ruthlessly. 14 They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the *fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.*

The very mention of the Hebrew’s ability to be prolific and grow and

spread in population is an indicator of the passage of time and at least a generation. Maybe two. So the pharaoh who slapped the Hebrews into bondage is not the same pharaoh who attempted to stunt their continued proliferation. See how a later pharaoh attempts to deal with the problem:

> 15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah,
> 16 “When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if
> you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” 17 The midwives,
> however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let
> the boys live. 18 Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why
> have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?”
>
> 19 The midwives answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they
> are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.”
>
> 20 So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more
> numerous. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

Here we have the introduction of a new pharaoh, who I believe is Pharaoh Thutmoses I, different from the pharaoh who first subjugated the Hebrews. I find it interesting that Moses—or perhaps the later editors of the book of Exodus—found it unnecessary to mention the names of the pharaohs, but included the names of seemingly insignificant midwives. Is this a deliberate slap in the face to the eternal nature of the pharaohs and their quest for historical immortality? Or is it simply homage played to legendary characters[2] in the rise of the Hebrew people while degrading the pharaoh by making his eternal name of less import?

> 22 Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every Hebrew boy that is born you
> must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”

It is interesting that Thutmoses I made his wishes known to all his people, not just to the army. He wanted the Hebrews eradicated, and he was speaking to the national pride of the Egyptian people; he was calling upon all of them to do away with the male babies, who would grow into soldiers and possibly revolutionaries who remembered their blood ties to the deposed Hyksos, as well as the harsh treatment with which the pharaohs treated their people.

It is the genocidal actions of Thutmoses I that led to his own royal daughter, Hatshepsut, becoming the young woman who found and raised Moses as her own, elevating him, as the Hyksos king elevated Joseph, to a position of power and authority—and possibly even a bid for the throne of

Egypt.

Moses and Jochebed by Pedro Américo, 1884.

Though the Oxford Chronology of the Pharaohs places Thutmoses's reign dates from 1506 BC to 1492 BC, there has been considerable scholarship done by a minority of Egyptologists that believe there was a miscalculation in the astrological time lines used to establish his reign. It is believed that they used a Memphian time line as opposed to the Theban time line, thereby setting his reign back by about 20 years to approximately 1526 BC to 1513 BC. This is a significant difference, not so much in numbers of years, as a 20-year discrepancy is minor compared to all the shiftings of reign dates represented in all the chronologies of the pharaohs that seem to slide haphazardly back and forth on the veritable whim of archaeological discovery.

Without being too technical, the Sothic year is basically a 365-day year that followed the annual rising of Sirius, the Egyptian name for the Greek star Sothis. A Sothic Cycle, then, became 1,461 ancient Egyptian years, whereas a Julian year (what we use today) was 1,460 years, calculating on a solar year that is 365.25 long, accounting for what we call the Leap Year, one of every

four. The rising of Sothis occurred within a month or so of the annual Nile flooding, which was of great importance to the agricultural society of ancient Egypt, and marked the beginning of the new Sothic year. But depending on whether you were taking your readings of Sothis from Memphis up in the Delta, or from Thebes in the desert south, that would determine the calendar date.[3]

The obelisk of Thutmoses I at Karnak Temple, Luxor.

Determining the precise date of any particular rise of Sothis/Sirius is incredibly difficult, especially in light of the fact that you need to know the precise latitude of where the observation was made. The Egyptian calendar

loses one day every four years, and the rise of Sothis/Sirius will take place on the very same day every year for four years in a row. The problem arises in that any observation recorded of that rise of Sothis/Sirius can date to any one of those four years within that cycle, making the observation of that rising not overtly precise. And that is why the chronologies of the kings of Egypt can tend to jump all over the map.

Of the three observations of the Sothis star used to calculate years, the third was during the reign of Amenhotep I, the father of Thutmoses I. Assuming this observation was made in Thebes, the dates of Amenhotep I's reign was established as happening between 1525 BC and 1504 BC. However, if this same observation was made in Memphis, Heliopolis, or some other Delta site, the entire chronology of the 18th Dynasty needs to be shifted back by some 20 years. But there is a lot of dispute over this among scholars.

So, you see, even the scholars don't always get it right all the time. Sometimes the alignment of the stars, in correspondence to the geographical location where that alignment was observed and catalogued for the purpose of establishing a critical date, become a subject of debate. And when you align that with the notion that ancient books compiled into the Bible should not be used to establish verifiable facts in history, you can start to see the scholarly debate ignited even further. If there is one thing we can expressly sink into your minds, it is that, just because something is contained within a book of faith, that should not preempt it from consideration in establishing historical facts. The writers of scripture may have had a spiritual teaching in mind, but that does not mean their events were complete fabrications. And as we have already seen in this book, and as we shall continue to demonstrate, biblical stories can be the basis for establishing veracity, especially when balanced against firsthand and secondhand archaeological data. When you can establish plausibility, you can begin to eradicate the notion that the information is untrustworthy. And make no mistake, there are many who begin their research having an established bias that the biblical accounting is simply myth, fable, or inaccurate on the basis of its inherent spirituality.

Keep in mind that the Egyptians did the very same thing. When they recorded the deeds of a pharaoh, they simply did not include the mundane, the humiliating, and the defeats. Everything was either turned into a positive exemplification of that pharaoh's accomplishments or a completely white-washed picture of his deeds. So when we align what appears to be biblical legend and myth with only superficial accounts of the pharaohs and their

times, we need to dig deeper into what we have already identified as secondary evidence.

Of course, all of this ancient exploration is based on what we *think we know* at any given time. And to place all of our answers on external archaeological sources is to discredit the writers of the Old Testament books as pure fabricators rather than people who had some clue as to what they were talking about. Further, the constant wrangling, argumentativeness, and finger pointing within the Egyptological and archaeological communities can give you an idea of just how invested one scholar or the other is in his or her particular theory. There is cocksureness to many of these researchers and theorists akin to a group of bishops discussing how many angels dance upon the head of a pin. The first question needs to be asked: Are there angels? The second would then be to establish their size and ability to change shape before one could even begin to determine whether or not they could dance upon a pin's head. And that demonstrates the point that the old adage was attempting to make, as well as the speculative research of academics illustrated in a very different way.

To directly quote John Ward: "We weren't there; we don't know." All we can do is sift through information and come to the most reasonable deduction of fact.

So, Thutmoses I seems to align best with the 1526–1513 BC reign dates, especially in light of the other facts that place him in those dates. This dating of his reign is also important to the aligning of biblical chronology with Egyptian chronology. Although history cannot be adjusted to match biblical stories, it can be found through external information, such as dating the chronologies on the calculations made by the Sothis star. Biblical stories can sometimes be aligned with historical data by use of external scientific means that are, in and of themselves, part of the ongoing debate that exists in academia.

You see, there is very little we know for sure. And the things we think we know for sure often times are upended by newer discoveries or archaeological data that flips an entire notion on its ear. Until there is absolutely no debate or opposing theories on a given subject, there is no absolute certainty. In a court of law, sometimes all you need is to establish a solid circumstantial case even when hard fact is impossible to establish.

A primary factor in establishing Thutmoses I's reign date is the notion that it was his daughter, Hatshepsut, who was the young princess that found

baby Moses in a basket on the Nile River. And there is a hinge-pin date from the pages of biblical chronology that place Moses and Hatshepsut as being together on that muddy Nile bank so long ago. But before we go there, let's take a little more intimate look at the Daughter of Pharaoh and how she can be identified as the young princess mentioned in Exodus.

Pharaoh's Daughter

> 5 Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. 6 She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.
>
> 7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"
>
> 8 "Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. 10 When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."
>
> —Exodus 2:5–10

As is the modus in historical study, you sometimes need to jump far ahead or far behind any given event to help establish its place in the historical record, not to mention its credibility. In the case of Thutmoses I's reign date as it pertains to his young daughter finding Moses in a basket on the Nile, it is important to understand where the biblical dating system fits into the larger picture of the chronology of the kings of Egypt.

Imagine, if you will, a young princess of Egypt named Hatshepsut, also known as Maatkare, her chosen throne name (prenomen),[4] daughter to a powerful pharaoh who is known for his conquests into Nubia and Canaan, extending the borders of the empire.[5] Her entire existence was one of a pampered life at the royal palaces in both the southern capital of Thebes and Mennefer, the northern capital of Egypt. She grew up surrounded by not only her personal attendants, but by royal servants and tutors who educated her in Egyptian history and cultures of the world. A veritable host of people tended to her every needs and watched over her every move and governed every facet of her education. Her father was in the second year of his reign, and was

continuing not only the expansion of Egyptian territory to its former glory and beyond, but also the internal campaign against the remnant of the Hyksos, defeated by his grandfather some two decades earlier. He recently mandated a public pogrom against the Hebrew slave people by issuing a mandate that all the baby boys were to be cast into the Nile, murdered so that they might not continue to increase in numbers and, again, overtake the Egyptians. It was a heinous measure, but one that he believed was necessary to protect his kingdom from encroachment from within. And this is the atmosphere in which the young Hatshepsut was raised; the people who she was taught to hate by virtue of their heritage and connection to the usurpant Hyksos were the forced laborers of her father whose children now suffered death by drowning. But she was also, in accordance with what we know about her deeds and accomplishments, a bit of a maverick, one who bucked the system if necessary to attain her personal goals. When she reached the throne, her building campaigns and works of art exceeded that of many other pharaohs, and she made an indelible imprint of her monarchy on Egyptian history.

According to Henry Breasted, Thutmoses I's only daughter, Hatshepsut is known as "the first, great woman in history of whom we are informed."[6] She bore the title of "Pharaoh's Daughter," being that she was the only royal princess of Thutmoses I, but it was her brother Thutmoses II who was the rightful heir to the throne of Egypt when their father died. Thutmoses II died very early into his reign, leaving a son, Thutmoses III, born Djehutymes, crowned as Menkhepere, of a lesser (probably harem) wife, and also a young daughter from his sister-wife, Hatshepsut, named Nefrure. Hatshepsut contested the ascension to the throne of her young stepson, Thutmoses III, on the grounds that her father had named her an equal successor to the throne with her brother-husband, who was now dead.

But let's move back to when she was seven to 10 years old. While out along the river bank, escorted by her royal entourage—which the biblical account also mentions to establish the young woman as *the* royal princess—on her way to bathing in the river near the palace at Mennefer, she found a basket made of reeds, smeared with pitch and tree sap. When she opened the basket, there was a baby boy who her servants immediately identified as a Hebrew child. Hatshepsut went on to claim him as her own, sending him back to her mother to be weaned until she was old enough to rightfully claim him. No doubt there were other hands in the making of her legal decision,

and she most certainly had problems convincing her father that she wanted to raise a Hebrew baby. But there is absolutely no historical record that she interacted with her father on this matter, nor that it ever truly happened. No historical record of this event has ever been found in Egyptian records of the day, and we have already established that not a single scrap of papyrus remains detailing the little affairs of daily life in the Delta region.

But Moses did give us some hint as to the identity of this remarkable Egyptian princess when, in the book of Exodus he calls her "Pharaoh's Daughter." For Hatshepsut, this was not merely a description of *who* she was, but a detailed, historical clue as to *what* she was. "Pharaoh's Daughter" was a title bestowed by Thutmoses I on his only daughter, Hatshepsut.

"Women of royal birth [in the 18th Dynasty] can be identified by the use of the title 'king's [Pharaoh's] daughter', since there is no evidence in the 18th Dynasty of women who are known to have had non-royal parents being given this title. This rules out the possibility that this title was sometimes awarded to enhance the status of non-royal women."[7]

In other words, the little phrase mentioned in Exodus is not just a casual epithet describing any child of the period, or even a harem child of the Pharaoh. It is an expressly royal title given only to the heir of the Pharaoh, just as the title of "Highness" was used for royal children who were direct descendants of kings and queens in European history. But there is some aversion out there, even among biblical archaeologists who filter all history through a scriptural perspective, to pinpoint Hatshepsut as the "Pharaoh's Daughter" of the Bible. Dr. Charles Aling cautions us to be careful to too quickly identify Hatshepsut as the "Pharaoh's Daughter" in the book of Exodus.[8]

When I was in my seminary days under the professorship of Dr. Aling, I presented my theory that Moses was raised by Hatshepsut. Even back then, some 30 years ago, the good Doctor advised me to use great care, because although the facts fit, the story borders on being far too romanticized, and that Moses should be raised by the heir to the throne rather than what was more probable in his view: a harem wife or daughter. With all due respect to my former teacher, who is a great man and a fervent critical thinker, I think the facts are far too strong to deny. Though caution may have us not pinpoint Hatshepsut, many more facts about her reign and later relationship with a man named Senenmut seem to strengthen the case for her being the Pharaoh's Daughter of the book of Exodus.

A little bit of rouge is left on the cheek of Pharaoh Hatshepsut at her Temple of Djeser Djeseru at Deir el Bahri.

Perhaps while omitting the names of all the Egyptian personalities, this is the one homage Moses makes to the woman who raised him and who represented much, much more, for “Pharaoh’s Daughter” could apply to no one other than Hatshepsut, and Moses fully knew this.

> “Then his majesty (Thutmoses I) said to them: ‘This daughter of mine, Khnumetamun Hatshepsut—may she live!—I have appointed as my successor upon my throne...she shall direct the people in every sphere of the palace; it is she indeed who shall lead you. Obey her words, unite yourselves at her command.’ The royal nobles, the dignitaries, and the leaders of the people heard this proclamation of the promotion of his daughter, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Maatkare—may she live eternally.”[9]
>
> —Inscription from Hatshepsut’s Djeser Djeseru, Temple of Deir el Bahari

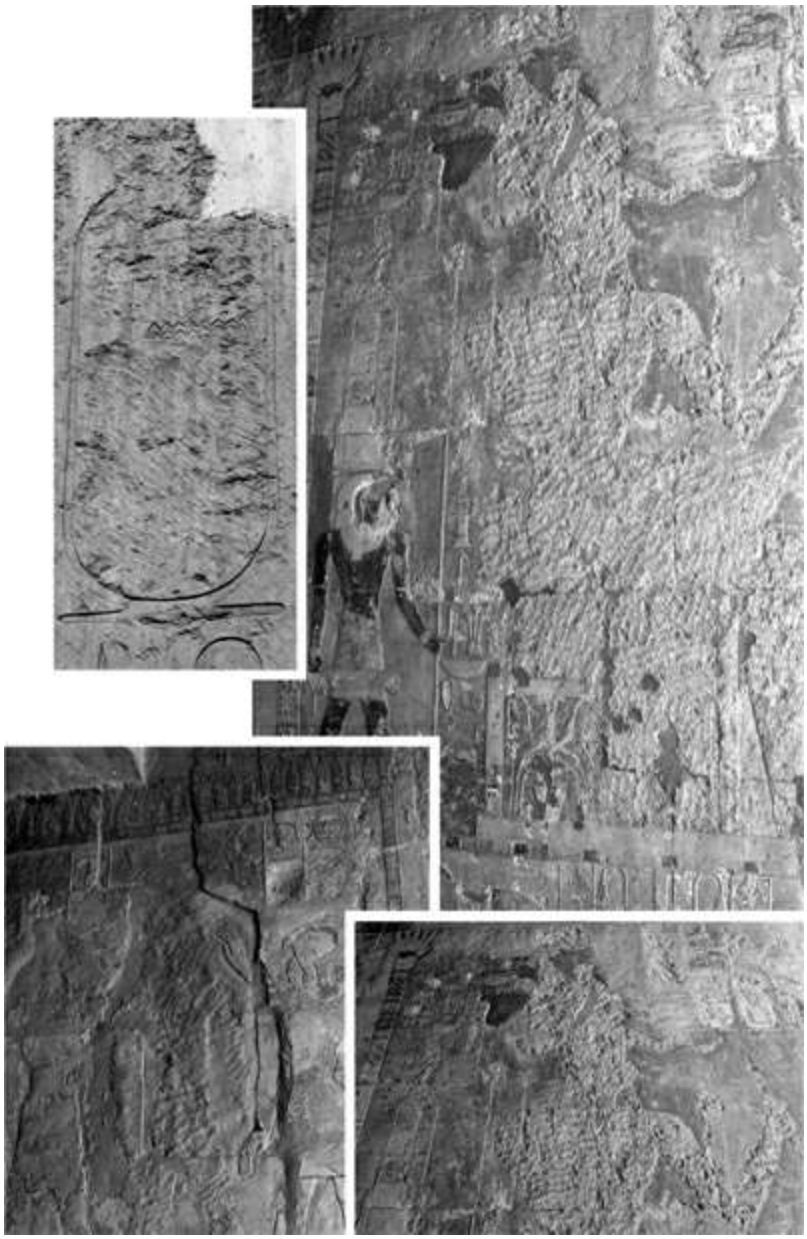
The queen who was a king, “Hatsheput,” by Julia Cuccia-Watts. Used by permission of the artist.

When Hatshepsut’s husband, her royal brother, Thutmoses II, died as a young man during his short reign of only 13 years, the throne passed to his son, Thutmoses III, born of a lesser harem wife. He was only 2 or 3 years old at the time of his ascension to the throne of Egypt. Hatshepsut was appointed his regent, but she declared herself Pharaoh, never denying that Thutmoses III was a fellow heir to the throne. He never played an active role in the rule of the empire, and possessed very little power, as Hatshepsut took on all the responsibilities of the pharaoh in every way. She ruled well, as she believed

she was born to take on this role, and her reign was marked by prosperity, expansion, and great advancement, and with that came the love and loyalty of the Egyptian people. When Thutmoses III was old enough and had demonstrated to her his capability to command and lead, she appointed him head of her armies. One would think that this would be a very precarious position to place a deposed royal sibling, but he apparently thrived under her rule and expressed no dislike of her until after her death, when in a papyrus written as a dedication to his coronation and ascension to the throne, he referred to Hatshepsut as "...that lying, deceitful woman..."

There seems to be great dispute over the relationship between Hatshepsut and Thutmoses III. Some say that there exists evidence of a bitter hatred for each other, evidenced by the desecration and removal of her images from her own temple and every other monument. Other evidence suggests that if there had been such bitterness between them, she would never have appointed him to a position heading her armies, as he who had the heart of the army had the seat of the throne.

Regarding the removal of Hatshepsut's images after her death, it has been thought for many years that this was the act of an embittered, hateful Thutmoses III, who had been declared Pharaoh when he was a small child. But it appears that much of what he did after her death was simply transforming her buildings and sites into his own.[10] Hatshepsut had started as his co-regent until he would be of age to take the throne on his own, yet she declared herself Pharaoh and took on all the functionality of the sole male monarch of Egypt, even down to wearing a male king's clothing and the headdress and false beard of the pharaoh. And she held the throne as Pharaoh until her death, 22 years later. What Thutmose did in his acts of defacement of Hatshepsut's image was to impose his image and presence over hers, establishing that he was indeed the rightful Pharaoh.



Even on the walls of her own sacred temple of Djeser Djeseru, Hatshepsut's face and figure were not safe from the egotism and hatred of her grandson, Amenhotep II, who, along with his father Thutmoses III's permission, carried out the defacement.

But newer information states that Thutmoses III did not disgrace or remove any of her images, as it is thought that one of Hatshepsut's trusted councilors would have been greatly offended. It was after that councilor's death that her images were removed—and it was not done under the order of Thutmoses III. It was his son, Amenhotep II, appointed co-regent with Thutmoses during the final two years of his reign, who ordered their removal. And what's even more interesting is that at the same time he removed the

images of Hatshepsut, he also removes all images of her favored councilor and lover, Senenmut.

If Senenmut was perceived to be an obstacle to Thutmoses's rise to power, his eradication was as important as that of Hatshepsut's, especially if Senenmut represented a possible challenge to the throne. Thutmoses III, after the disappearance of Senenmut and the death of Hatshepsut (who became obese in her later years and died as a result of what forensic archaeologists now believe were complications brought on by diabetes), went on to become one of the 18th Dynasty's most remarkable golden rulers. His campaigns and treaties, as well as his own building projects, elevated Thutmose III to the status of any of the other great pharaohs. His deeds after the death of Hatshepsut are not as pertinent to this text, but could fill volumes all on their own.

Senenmut, the Hereditary Crowned Prince of Egypt

> 11 One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. 12 Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?"
>
> 14 The man said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and thought, "What I did must have become known."
>
> 15 When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.
>
> —Exodus 2:11–15

Let's cut to the quick. Senenmut, favored courtier to Pharaoh Hatshepsut, is the very same man we know as Moses, traditional author of the Old Testament book of Exodus and the other four books of the Pentateuch. Boom. Period. The previous excerpt from Exodus provides some pretty strong evidence, and in my own mind this is how I see things unfolding for Moses at that exact moment:

I took the dagger in my hand and without even considering the

ramifications or who was watching, I clutched the back of the taskmaster's neck and yanked him off balance, at the same time thrusting the blade deep into his kidney. He turned and looked at me in horror recognizing me, eyes wide, mouth agape, but unable to scream. He dropped his whip into the sand. His hand attempted some defensive posture, but I closed my forearm around his throat, drawing his sweaty, stinking body up against my own and twisted the dagger up and deeper into the underside of his ribcage, piercing his liver and probably the base of his lung. He let out a whispy, chuttering final breath while staring off into nothing as his ka departed his body. When his lifeless carcass slumped, I loosened my hold and let him slide to the ground, a fresh heart for Ammit to consume, as there is no doubt that the heart of a man of such cruelty would certainly be found by Anubis to outweigh the feather of Ma'at.

I shifted a single step backward and sat down in the sand, staring at the lifeless form crumpled at my feet. Perhaps it it not mine to judge, but am I not Senenmut, my Mother's Brother? Am I not a son of Hebrew blood? Have I not been made brother to the Great Mother of Egypt, the personification of the gods on earth, Hatshepsut, my one true friend and my one true love? Did she not draw me from the Nile and fashion me for a prince of Egypt? Am I not her appointed hereditary Crowned Prince, and have I not witnessed enough of the abuse of these people so hated by her father and her grandfather—my people—the people of my blood whom I see downtrodden every day at the behest of old blood feuds and even older prejudices of enemies long past?

As I sit in this sand, I vow to Amun, to Ma'at, to Ra that this corpse at my feet be buried here in obscurity, not only to hide the brashness of my anger, but that his ba never again finds his ka! And let that damned son of a lesser woman, that other pharaoh of deposed obscurity, never know of this deed so that when I ever rise to the power of the throne, I will end this bitter enslavement forever. Let inhumanity know inhumanity, and death to those who would rule from bitterness and cruelty. And may I protect my King who will ever be my Queen, from any and all who would seek her downfall.

There is historical data that would lead us *not* to draw this conclusion, but there is also an incredible amount of circumstantial evidence that leads me to believe that these men were the same man. Moses is a perplexing historical

character. And, yes, I say *historical,* because I believe there is no reason to doubt his existence in real history simply because he is predominantly mentioned in books of faith. But even more perplexing than Moses is the event inextricably linked to his name: the Exodus. And even though I put out the theory, it is vapid and empty without creating at least a plausible basis on which to apply the legend.

Dating Moses is the easy part, depending on which dating system and chronology of kings you engage, but *proving* his existence is nearly impossible without speculative extrapolation and attribution based not on firsthand evidence, as that does not exist, but on secondary evidence, which brings plausibility to the story.

According to the biblical narrative and rabbinic tradition, Moses grew up in the royal courts of Egypt, the adopted son of "Pharaoh's Daughter." He was born to a Hebrew couple of the tribe of Levi, the eventual priestly caste of Israelites. They and all the Hebrews were, according to the book of Exodus, slaves to the Pharaoh of Egypt, and had been for some 350 years since their original family migrated from Canaan to Egypt during a time of famine.

Solomon's Temple Is the Key

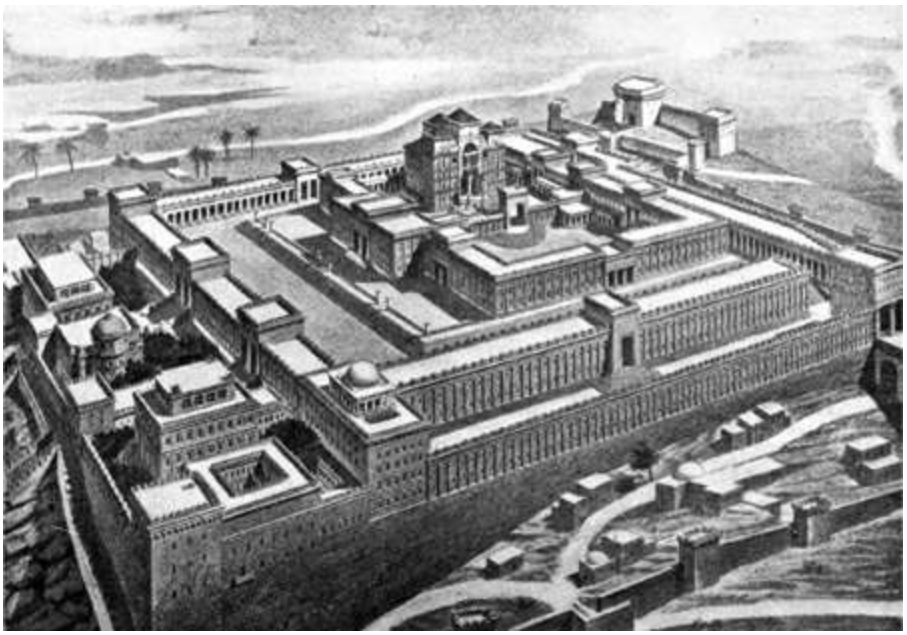
> If someone is going to state a date for any event in the history of Israel, then they can't provide that date in "isolation." This is to say that if someone uses the Bible to demonstrate that their date for something is correct, then you have to check to see if that date is supported by all of the surrounding Bible Chronology. Just about every academic alters the Biblical data wherever and whenever they choose. If the Bible is written by qualified commentators, then we ought to be able to conclude that the chronological information contained within it ought to be as trustworthy as any other ancient record, and its failure to synchronize results from Our failure to correctly apply that information. When was Solomon's Temple commenced? 970 BCE. When was Solomon's Temple completed? 964 BCE. When was Solomon's Temple destroyed?—586 BCE.[11]
>
> —R.P. BenDedek

Although there are many theories surrounding the dating of Moses and the Exodus, our focus remains in the middle of the 15th century BC, placing the event of the Great Exodus in 1446 BC, during the fifth year of the reign of Amenhotep II. I arrive at this date based on an Old Testament reference that includes an event that is considered to be a "rock solid" date in history: the

founding of Temple 1 in Jerusalem, also known as Solomon's Temple. Though there is great dispute over the very existence of King Solomon of Israel, there is no dispute over the dating of the temple attributed to him, at least among those who believe that Temple 1 was an historical and archaeological fact. And there is some dispute over its archaeological existence at all. But if the biblical writers and chroniclers are to be trusted, the median date of the founding of Temple 1—give or take a disputed three to six years in either direction—is 966 BC.[12]

In the Hebrew bible's book of 1 Kings 6:1, it states that on the day that Solomon founded the Temple in Jerusalem, it had been 480 years since the Exodus. 966 + 480 = 1446. "In the four hundred and eightieth year ['480' is in the Hebrew; the Septuagint says '440'] after the Israelites came out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the Lord."

Is it really that easy? If the biblical narrative is accurate, 480 years had passed since the Exodus, and Temple 1 was built in 966 BC. That gives us 1446 BC as the date of the Exodus, the date when Moses was about 80 years old, according to the Jewish story. If that is so, then Moses would have been born in 1526 BC, under the reign of Thutmoses I, whose only daughter was a young girl named Hatshepsut; she bore the distinctive, singular title of "Pharaoh's Daughter," meaning, "Pharaoh's Only Female Heir." If it was the remarkable Hatshepsut who found Moses in a basket in the Nile, and she indeed raised him as her own, Moses would have been an amazing man.



Artist’s stylized reconstruction of mid-10th century BC’s Solomon’s Temple as described in the Bible.

Dr. Charles Aling, Egyptologist and chair of history at Northwestern College in Minnesota, has a description of the educational curriculum for royal children in royal educational system of 18th Dynasty Egypt. He writes that teachers and royal tutors were selected from officials of the land who were favorites of the reigning monarch. These royal students would study hieroglyphics and other scripts, copying and memorizing lengthy lists of words, dates, and names. They also studied the foreign languages of their world. Oratory skills were considered extremely important so they “received heavy attention during the years of formal education.”[13] The ability to write well was also placed at a very high value. If young Moses was Hatshepsut’s adopted son, he would have been educated in the royal school of 18th Dynasty Egypt, the most superior form of education available in the world at that time. This would certainly qualify the biblical description of his education, as well as his ability and competency to stand before a Pharaoh and present sterling oratory, even though he originally protested God’s calling him to return to Egypt with the argument that he was “slow of speech,” not a gifted speaker. And most certainly his capability to write the first five books of the Old Testament is evidence enough that he was schooled in the highest caliber. It is doubtful, by evidence of his writings, that he forgot any of this education while living as a sheik in the back country of Sinai’s Midian.

One of the few remnants of stele left showing both Hatshepsut and Thutmoses III as co-regents, bearing the king's cartouche above both.

As we already know, Hatshepsut bore no royal heirs to succeed her on the throne, save for her daughter Nefrure, who died around the age of 16, sometime between year 11 and 16 of her mother's reign. Hatshepsut had been married to her own weak and sickly brother, Thutmoses II, who died, leaving his very young son, Thutmoses III. Hatshepsut became co-regent with her dead husband's son, then named herself Pharaoh and dominated his reign until the day she died around 1483 BC. An interesting speculation, however, is that Hatshepsut, having a deeply set hatred of her brother/husband, found in Moses someone whom she could groom to take the throne in her place, pushing Thutmoses III completely out of the picture. But because there is only a maximum of seven to 10 years in age between Moses and Hatshepsut, it has also been speculated that she meant for him to simply be retained as her valued councilor and a failsafe should she die.

When Moses was 40 years old, according to the biblical narrative, he and his royal entourage encounter an Egyptian taskmaster beating a Hebrew slave. In anger, Moses struck out and murdered the taskmaster. Fearing this would become known, Moses fled Egypt and ran to the land of Midian, where he became a shepherd and married the daughter of the pagan high priest of the region. Then his story falls silent for 40 more years until his return to Egypt, post-burning bush epiphany.

In the meantime, one must wonder what really happened behind the scenes of the biblical story. It is my contention that a likely candidate for

Moses during his 40 years of life at the Egyptian palace was this man named Senenmut, who was the tutor to Hatshepsut's daughter, Nefrure, as well as Hatshepsut's most trusted advisor. Keep in mind, a royal tutor was not necessarily a scholarly, educator type; they were generally men of military accomplishment and some importance. According to Jewish traditional stories in the Mishnah, Moses had been a fiercely ambitious general under the pharaoh.

Senenmut lived under the gracious and benevolent eye of Hatshepsut, some accounts even hailing to their relationship as possible lovers, despite the nearly 10-year age difference between them. Senenmut was granted nearly 90 titles bestowed on him by Hatshepsut, including Hereditary Crowned Prince of Egypt, Count, Sole Companion, Master of All People, Chief of the Whole Land, Royal Vizier, and Chief Royal Architect. A significant title she bestowed on Senenmut was in the changing of his name to Senenmut, which means "Mother's Brother." In essence, it was a title elevating a son to the status of equal with his mother, allowing him to claim equal status of "brother to the gods" with his pharaonic parent. A more simplistic defining of his name is very similar, but less personal, meaning, "The Mother of Egypt elevates you as a brother in equal status." Or was this a name/title she granted Moses as he grew, learned, and became her lover and closest political ally?

Senenmut's royal appointments included: chief steward who conducted all the works of the king, one who heard the hearing alone in the privy council, master of the palace, real confidant of the king, privy councilor of the right hand, chief steward of the Princess Nefrure.

Senenmut's administrative titles included: wearer of the royal seal, steward of Amun, overseer of the granary of Amun, overseer of the storehouse of Amun, overseer of the works of Amun, overseer of all [works] of the house of silver, overseer of the gardens of Amun, Overseer of the cattle of Amun, Chief of the peasant-serfs of Amun, overseer of the temples of Neit.

Senenmut's religious titles included: prophet of Amun, prophet of Ma'at, chief of the prophets of Montu in Hermonthis.[14]

Senenmut.

It's almost certain, scholars agree, that Senenmut, the official overseer of works at Deir el-Bahri, was the mastermind behind—if not the actual architect of—the temple. He had most likely begun his climb to power during the reign of Thutmose II, when he was appointed tutor to Hatshepsut's daughter, Nefrure. But his influence soared with Hatshepsut's accession to the throne. In time he acquired some 93 titles, the most prestigious of which was Great Steward of Amun (the god of Thebes), which put him in charge of all of Karnak's building and business activities.

Many of Senenmut's monuments to himself (some 25—a staggering number for a nonroyal) mention his exceptional access to the throne; he was a "true confidant" of the pharaoh and the "one upon whose utterances his Lordrelied." But earlier scholars' belief that Senenmut was the real force behind Hatshepsut's rule—not "even a woman of the most virile character could have attained such a pinnacle of success without masculine support," wrote historian Alan Gardiner in 1961—has now been largely discounted by experts as a woeful underestimation of Hatshepsut.[15]

But somewhere around 1486–1485 BC, Senenmut disappears completely

off the Egyptian scene. Incidentally, if you're keeping up on the mathematics, if Moses was born in 1526 BC, he would have turned 40 in 1486 BC, the same year he is said to have murdered the Egyptian task master and fled Egypt—and the same approximate year that Senenmut completely disappears from Egypt. Whether he was murdered or fled for some other political reason, if he was indeed the same man as Moses, the chronology of his life is a perfect match. And the fact that he leaves without anything ever being said about it in the Egyptian record might be an indicator of who he truly is.

It is my contention that there is obviously much more at play than what we read in the Hebrew scripture, and I speculate that because Moses could have been raised to take his adoptive mother's place on the throne of Egypt, he had a voracious political foe in her stepson, Thutmoses III, and I believe it was this murdering of the Egyptian task master that gave Thutmoses III the political opportunity to off his rival as well as his hated mother's favorite. The dates fit, the timeline works, but there simply is no proof beyond speculation built upon the circumstantial acts of the historical figures. And when Moses is commanded by God to return to the pharaoh of Egypt and demand the release of the Hebrews, what is his first refusal? "I can't go back there; the Pharaoh is seeking my life!" Why, after 40 years in hiding, was Moses still worried that the Pharaoh of Egypt was seeking his life? Was it because he murdered a task master? Or did it have more to do with the factionalism that may have existed between Thutmoses III and Hatshepsut? She trusted in his abilities enough to place him in charge of her armies, but he didn't ever seem to make a move to depose her from what should have been his throne. Perhaps Thutmoses III was biding his time, or perhaps it was because Hatshepsut had garnered too much favor with the people, or perhaps her priests, councilors, and other courtiers were far too powerfully aligned with her. And now, when Moses is asked to return to Egypt, this man is on the throne at least for two more years as co-regent with his son, Amehotep II.

The Sacred Lake built by Thutmoses III at Karnak Temple, Luxor.

Whatever the reason may be, there might have been a constant opportunistic plotting wherever there was a way to make subtle attacks from the sidelines without making an overt show of discord or rebellion. And Moses/Senenmut's killing of the task master may have been just the animus Thutmose III needed to eradicate his mother's favorite courtier and chosen lover. It may also have been a cover story for much greater events that would lead to Moses fleeing Egypt, because as a member of the royal household, he would not have had to flee for the killing of a man who was, in essence, one step above a slave. That could have been easily forgiven. So why did he run? That is an unanswerable question outside speculation.

When Moses did return to Egypt, an old man after 40 years in hiding, he had the court of Pharaoh Amenhotep II living in fear of his words. His old royal training kicked in, and he had them living in awe of his very shadow. I think this is because he may have been recognized for who he had once been in those alabaster courts of the Royal House of Egypt. And this may also be the reasoning behind Amenhotep's eradication of not only Hatshepsut's images, but Senenmut's as well. Hatshepsut remained a symbol of his father's early deposition from the throne of Egypt. And even

after her death, Thutmose III had very little he could do to remedy that injustice until certain factions had died off. Amenhotep, brash, young, and egotistical, took the matter into his own hands, and in order to establish his complete and total reign over Egypt, removed all images of Hatshepsut as well as the man who stood by her side. Now, after 40 years, he returned to complete the humiliation. Exodus 7:1–6 reads:

> 1 Then the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. 2 You are to say everything I command you, and your

brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. 3 But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in Egypt, 4 he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. 5 And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it."

6 Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded them. 7 Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh.

What most of us fail to understand, both in the academic arena and the realm of personal belief, is that the Bible, in addition to being a religious book of faith, is also an extensive historical document, which, when combined with extra-biblical ancient Israelite and Egyptian documents, provides far more chronological and historical information than you find in any other ancient civilization whose records are more favorably treated as "truth" in our ever increasingly anti-religious world. You don't have to accept the religious part, if you so choose, but it is imperative that you see the Bible as it truly is: a series of historical documents blended with matters of faith. Is it always correct? No. But is it pure fabrication simply on the basis that it is a book of faith?

Absolutely not.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Aftermath

THE HAPU THREAD

It is easy for me to see how the invited Hebraic scholars in Alexandria during the Ptolemaic period may have based their biblical Ten Plagues upon (or at the very least been inspired by) such a scenario as the one in Chapter 6. One must not overlook the fact that Nature itself is an act of God, and therefore adds credence to the Exodus story. In doing so, it bolsters the faith issue that surrounds the questioning of the biblical narrative, if indeed the scenario took place.

So the plagues within the pages of Exodus can be attributed to the horrific set of circumstances that followed the natural calamity, from the locusts migrating in on the eastern winds from Asia to the blow flies that bred on rotting corpses of both human and animal as they lay out in the Egyptian sun to decompose. The streets and flood plains ran red with the blood of those who lost their lives in the initial shock, followed by those who died soon afterward as they were gorged upon by the local indigenous animal population. The crops and other vegetation were either destroyed during the event or they were eaten by those who sought a food source.

These and many of the Ten Plagues could be attributed to the events, and those that preceded the disaster to the last plague, which has become known as the Passover, could be a direct correlation to the overall devastation and its associated fatalities. During the 18th Dynasty, in particular the years of 1359 BC and 1352 BC, there was an 80-percent solar eclipse over Thebes and in the later years a total solar eclipse in the northern territories of Egypt.[1] Could

these solar eclipses be attributed to the darkening of the skies? In Exodus 10:21, the eclipses are referenced: *"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.'"*

Regrettably, there is not enough space within these pages to discuss the current scientific research being carried out by various academic institutions regarding the possible effects of increased solar activity and its effects upon the Earth's climate. Could it be that, at that time, Earth was experiencing a solar maximum (a 12-year solar cycle that has its maximum and minimum)? The impact it would have upon the climate of Africa would increase the rainfall in Ethiopia, which had a direct impact upon the Nile's flood levels downstream in Egypt, and the embankments of Thebes would be unprepared to deal with such an increase in water levels, eventually succumbing to its terrible fate.[2]

So, one might ask: Are the effects of the disaster an inspiration for the Ten Plagues of Egypt? We have no clear archaeological evidence to support the theory, but I believe that there was a catalyst for the political and spiritual breakup of Thebes during the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep III just after his 31st regal year. There is also the question of the missing city of Thebes, together with the lack of commoner graves and tombs in the area. For sure the west bank of Luxor holds many tombs that have served the upper classes and noble families of Thebes, but we do not have the graves that would have belonged to the weavers, the fishermen, the farmers, their children, or their wives. They are missing, possibly lost in the sands of time. It is quite possible that we have yet to discover these or some sort of funerary practice that would provide reasons for their apparent absence.

Archaeologists in Egypt have yet to discover the city of Thebes or its common burials, but there are many examples of habitation, such as the brilliant workman's village at Deir el Medina, which housed the craftsmen and their families as they worked on the tombs and temples of the pharaohs. There are also small hamlets of crowded mud brick dwellings that hug the perimeter of Karnak to the east bank of Luxor. However, for an ancient city that has gained such notoriety, it is lacking its central town, its epicenter of trade and commerce. Over the thousands of years that Luxor grew, and its population increased, it is reasonable to assume that the ancient city lies beneath the streets and shops of today's modern city. A glance at earlier maps of the area show a different story, though, with islands shown that were

circumnavigated by the rising and falling Nile waters. On these respective islands we have today's ancient ruins, which, when first discovered by early European explorers, were either buried beneath tons of accumulated sand, or built over and incorporated within local mud brick housing that had taken root within the older structures.

The empty workers village at Deir el Medina, Luxor.

Historical records and earlier photographic images show us such cases. For instance, the grand temple of Medinat Habu located only a stone's throw from the great palace of Amenhotep III, which was inhabited by early Christians until the late eighth century when they deserted their homes due to the plague that had infested the town. However, most of the basilicas and other associated early Christian buildings were removed in the early 20th century during archaeological excavations of the site.

Recent discoveries at the royal palace of Amenhotep III and the housing complex that may have served the guests and dignitaries were recently re-excavated by the Michael C. Carlos Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and were found to be completely empty. Not even a bead was discovered—a rare occurrence within Egyptology.[3] Their white plastered floors were still intact and pristine. Could this be a sign of a hurried exit? Or maybe a plundering of articles and resources as stated within not only biblical text, but also within the Admonitions:

> Then he said to Abram, “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them for four hundred years. Also the nation whom they serve I will judge, afterwards they shall come out with great possessions.”
>
> —Genesis 15:13–14
>
> Now the Children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold and clothing. And the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.
>
> —Exodus 12:35–36
>
> O, but the face is pale [missing text]
>
> O, but they [missing text] what the ancestors foretold, which has reached fruition, [missing text]
>
> —“Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage” Leiden Papyrus 344

The “Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage,” together with other notable ancient Egyptian texts, are included within the collective terminology of “wisdom literature” and have apparent associations with later biblical texts. Is it fair to suggest that the Hebraic scholars in Alexandria were aware of these sacred ancient texts? Could it be that while in the great Library of Alexandria they took the opportunity to read through some of the texts as means of background research? The very same institution that had copied and gathered almost all ancient texts not only from Egypt but its surrounding counterparts as well would be able to offer its contemporary scholar a veritable hive of information and material. A vast depository of knowledge and wisdom clearly available as research material for those now writing the history of the Hebrews possibly would have been too good of an opportunity to pass up. Within the walls of the library, no one would have questioned them; in fact, it may have been intentional.

Between the years of 1357 BC and 1356 BC, Thebes was still undergoing a tremendous building program that had really begun at the beginning of Pharaoh Amenhotep III’s rise to the throne after the death of his father, Pharaoh Thutmoses IV, when he was a child. The people of Thebes had witnessed the development of not only royal palaces and temples, but also infrastructure, trade, and other social resources that had placed Thebes as the

main port of trade and the capital of Egypt over the usually favored city of Memphis in the north.[4] One cannot argue the splendor of the private tombs of the nobles that line the Theban Mountains in modern-day Luxor; their exquisite art and depictions of everyday life are an invaluable source of archaeological material for those who are piecing together the history of that period. Unfortunately, most of the larger structures were hurriedly built from little else than straw and mud. Sun-dried mud bricks were the new stone during the period of Amenhotep III; it was a resource that could be manufactured easily and in great abundance in a short period of time. As we read in Exodus 5:7: *"You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves."*

This rhetoric that was handed down from Pharaoh to the task masters after his initial conversation with Moses and Aaron regarding the fate of the Hebrew slaves and their requested release, adds a somewhat romantic edge to the story, which I suggested previously. At this point I must ask if there were indeed Hebrew slaves living and practicing their own religion and faith that differed from that of the state religion? If there were, then surely it is reasonable to assume that we would have some kind of archaeological record of this within the numerous tombs, temples, and graffiti that line the walls and cliffs of ancient Thebes. Yet, I have not yet seen or read such a record or found such an inscription during my extensive investigations that can place the Hebraic religion within Thebes (or any other ancient Egyptian city for that matter) prior to the dates mentioned previously. Could it be that they were not in Egypt? The biblical names of Pithom and Pi-Ramesses together with Goshen only add to the confusion though these are cities that dwell close to the borderlands where migrating families and other immigrants would have settled within Egypt's lands. Scotty has already discussed the history behind the said biblical names and their association with earlier biblical text. Even Scotty disagrees with me, and places his own theory of Exodus within the area of Memphis in the North of Egypt toward the modern capital of Cairo today.

But it does raise the important question: If the Hebrews were in Egypt, then where is the evidence to support this? Why has there been such a lack of supporting archaeological material if we are to take the biblical narrative as correct and accurate?

Semitic slaves making mud brick from the walls of the tomb of Grand Vizier Rekhmire.

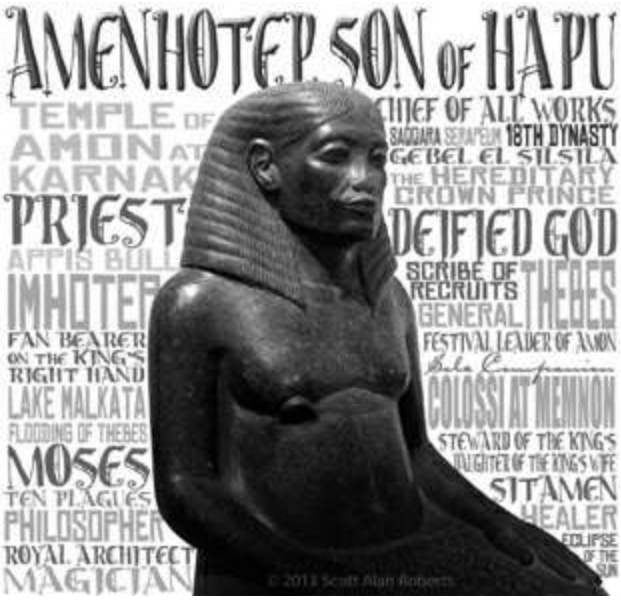
Let us return to the bricks: If they were indeed inferior, and incomplete due to the lack of core ingredients (as stated within biblical text), then this would have only added to their weakness, and eventual fate, which befell Thebes, although I would suggest that sun-dried bricks and thin mud skim would not really hold up to a deluge of water at any given time, and therefore some poetic narrative has been levied here by the Hebrew scholars to add credence to the plight of the so-called Hebrew slave. Many ancient structures within Egypt today are built from original mud brick, and have stood the test of time and Nature's wrath. Held together with little more than a mud adhesive and a few interspersing layers of reed, the mud brick structures that we can observe today are usually 3 to 4 meters in thickness, and due to their intense width and weight, they have held together for more than 3,000 to 4,000 years.

During the Ptolemaic period when the Hebrew scholars were invited to Alexandria, they would have observed many tremendous structures that were entirely built from mud brick. The ancient city of Sebennytos, possibly one of Egypt's largest recorded mud brick structures, which stood centrally between Alexandria and Cairo, is but one example. Local legend[5] has it that the holy family stayed there during their flight into Egypt; however, it was this very legend that met its fate during the Middle Ages when it was raised to the ground by the embittered Muslim population, completely wiping it from the historical record until early European archaeological excavations begun.

Another fine example of ancient mud brick structures has to be the enclosure wall of the Karnak Temple, which surrounds the entire complex, rising in some areas to more than 10 meters in height and in excess of 3 meters in width, forming a wavy pattern that it is supposed to resemble the waves of the river Nile. If one looks closely at the mud brick enclosure wall, one can clearly see that it has been built in sections; this was probably an architectural necessity due to the sheer size and weight of them. Even during our joint research expedition in 2013 when Scotty joined me in Egypt, we embarked on making our own mud bricks (with great success, I might add). Though I know it was nowhere near as arduous as it would have been for our characters in ancient Thebes, or the cinematic depiction during Cecil B. DeMille's epic movie, *The Ten Commandments,* it still produced the required outcome.

An Apocalyptic Migration?

So how can such an apocalyptic outcome have bearing upon the biblical Exodus? The suggestion that the remaining survivors of the event split and formed their own respective groups out of necessity for survival is pivotal to the overall outcome. I narrowed these groups down to three specific ones, each one representing an Exodus in its own right. Whether this is right or wrong, I feel that they each have their own merits that contribute toward the overall saga.



Amenhotep, son of Hapu.

Group One laid the blame for their apparent situation at Pharaoh's feet, and in doing so, sought the reassurance of someone who could lead them to safety and security, which was lacking in their current lives and was required if they were to survive this terrible ordeal. This is a combination of various smaller groups that left the ruins behind them and sought to rebuild their lives in the neighboring nomes.

Group Two remained loyal to the royal household and helped with its re-building. This group was possibly made up from those who would have surrounded Pharaoh prior to the event, such as his faithful generals and their subordinates, the Medjay, and the aristocratic families that benefitted from the trade and wealth of the city. As they say, better the devil you know. The priests remaining neutral would have been swayed toward Pharaoh and his royal house, as their adherence would have been to the personification of the living God, regardless of their own predicament or personal views.

And yet there would be others, Group Three, who would find solace in a new religion and a new god, one who would rise through the ranks of the pantheon and take the place of Amun-Ra as the definitive God of the Egyptians. This is, of course, the cult of the Aten and its famous historical avid supporter, Akhenaten the heretic king. Later, he would lead a collection of spiritually broken people searching for answers that were no longer being offered by their existing faith.

It is well documented that Amenhotep IV, the younger son of Pharaoh, had begun building the city of Akhetaten in the northern deserts of Egypt during his supposed co-regency with his father, Pharaoh Amenhotep III.[6] Although the co-regency theory is hotly contested among scholars, it is somewhat accepted at the same time, as it facilitates other historical events and inaccuracies that have not been substantiated due to the lack of archaeological evidence. The death of his older brother is one argument that truly has not been resolved; his tomb has yet to be discovered, and there is no other evidence to suggest his death as either natural or before his father's first Sed festival.

Amarna

The new gleaming city of Akhetaten was almost completed at the time I

suggest for the Exodus. It would have provided a more than suitable location for the new capital of Egypt, affording the necessary shelter and basic needs required for those who would follow him and his newly emerging cult, although the deity Aten had been worshipped in ancient Egypt for many years prior to Akhenaten's claim. The fate of Amun-Ra and the Theban priests of Amun would develop and ensue in the coming months and years ahead, as history and archaeological records have shown us. The rise of the heretic Pharaoh has, for some, captured their imagination and is seen by many as the father of monotheistic religion after abandoning the traditional Egyptian polytheism. Not to mention his association with many New Age theories suggests his apparent likeness to Moses, and that he indeed led the Exodus out of Thebes. The theory close to this was promoted by Sigmund Freud and was considered by many mainstream Egyptologists of the time: the character of Moses was possibly an Atenist High Priest, who after the death of Akhenaten and subsequent destruction of Akhetaten, left with a collection of devout Atenists to explore and expand their general spiritual idea of monotheism, and in doing so led to the formation and origin of the Hebrews within Israel.[7]

At this juncture, I would like to suggest that Akhenaten did lead a group of survivors to Akhetaten in the northern deserts in the wake of the disaster that befell Thebes. From there he would eventually lead Egypt as its Pharaoh, and in essence lead the third Exodus.

But for those who neither followed Akhenaten to the new northern capital city nor remained with his father, the beleaguered pharaoh, or sought refuge outside of Thebes in neighboring cities, their choice was one of hardship and sacrifice, one that would endure the test of time, and be written about for thousands of years to come. I refer here of course to the great biblical Exodus, or at least my version of it.

But who could have led these weakened people? Who possessed the knowledge and wisdom to carry out such an endeavor? Who had experience with arranging such massive movements of people across desolate environments? And who had geographical knowledge of the eastern areas of Egypt?

CHAPTER NINE

Amenhotep, Son of Hapu: The True Moses

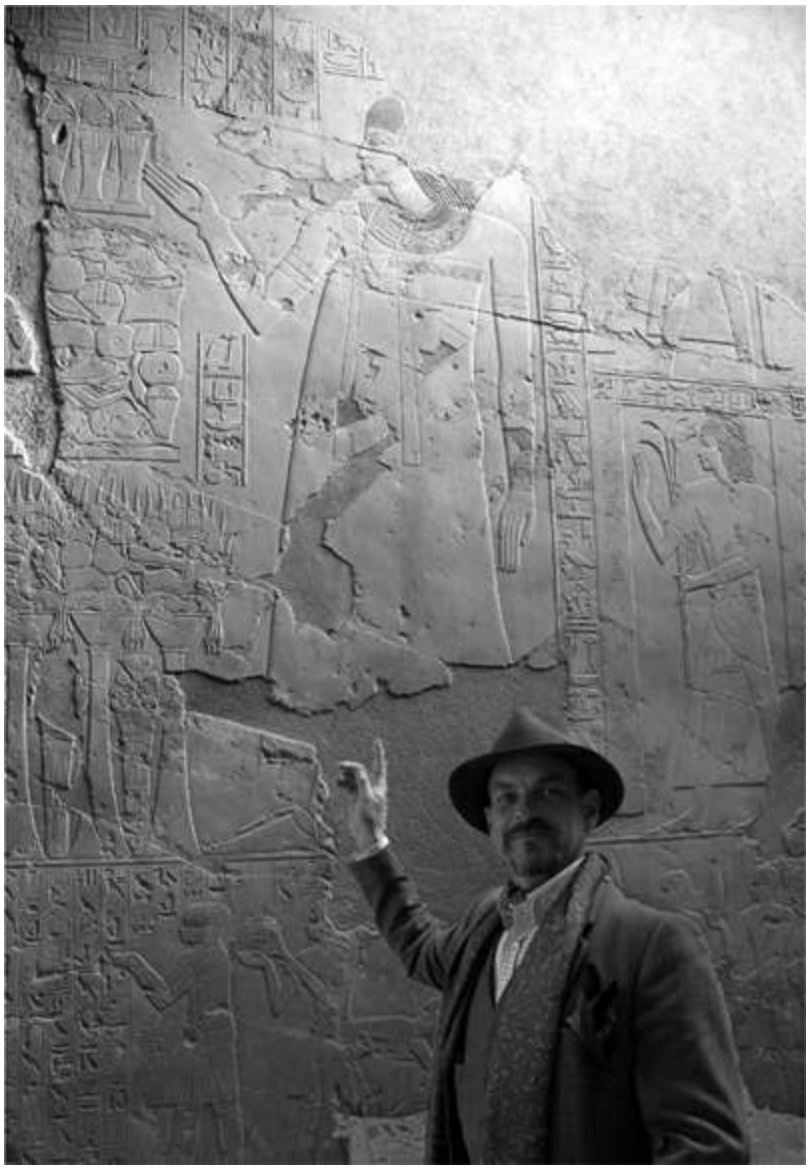
THE HAPU THREAD

In my opinion, there is only one man who could have carried out the Exodus, and this is where I would like to introduce you to my main character, the one that I suggest the Hebrew scholars use as a role model for their Moses character. He possessed all the attributes I have mentioned in previous chapters, he was well known and revered among his peers (which were few given his age), and he was also well respected by Egypt and its diplomatic neighbors due to his longevity. He was a capable explorer and great sage, having trained in the sacred halls of both Memphis and Thebes. He witnessed the passing of as many as nine pharaohs during his lifetime, an achievement that very few others could claim. He studied the great books of Thoth, mastering their secrets and collecting knowledge and wisdom beyond the stars. He was an accomplished military strategist and a battlefield veteran. He had created huge monuments to the living gods that seemed to soar into the heavens. He had transported megalithic blocks of stone that mesmerize and capture our imagination even today. He was a successful healer and great magician. He had conversed with the gods face to face as one would to a friend. He wrote prolifically and had read most, if not all, the sacred scrolls held within the great libraries of the temples of Egypt.

Amenhotep, son of Hapu, fills the sandals that no man could ever fill, and accomplished deeds that no one has accomplished since, in my opinion. However, there is little archaeological evidence about this great man before his climb to fame and fortune in Thebes during the 18th Dynasty. Born in the city of Athribis in 1440 BC in the south of ancient Egypt, his mother, Idit,

later became a Hathoric priestess known as “Hathor Idit, the justified.” His father, Hapu, was referred to as “The living herald Apis.”[1] It was the much earlier Pharaoh Ahmose, one of the founding fathers of the 18th Dynasty, who began bestowing hereditary titles of rank to commoners;[2] Hapu’s descendants were examples of that, allowing his family to rise through the ranks of the aristocracy in the coming years. By doing so, it afforded Hapu the education that propelled him on a journey that we are still marveling at today some 3,400 years later!

John Ward with Amenhotep, son of Hapu, at the backside of the Temple of Ptah, Karnak Temple Complex, Luxor.



The Tomb of Ramose, vizier to Amenhotep III, Valley of the Nobles, Luxor.

The famed Imhotep and Amenhotep, son of Hapu, at Karnak, Luxor.

We know much of Hapu's career through the translation of texts that adorn his statues and other inscriptions that have been dedicated to him mainly after his disappearance circa 1357 BC.[3] During the Graeco-Roman period some 1,000 years later he was deified as a god of healing[4] and coupled with Imhotep, the great architect of the 3rd Dynasty, who had also been deified by the Graeco-Roman community as a god of healing and magical powers. Imhotep is more famous for his architecture that has graced the sands of Egypt since the time of the old kingdom, Saqqara, and the stepped pyramid of the Pharaoh Djoser. Standing on the plateau overlooking the swollen waters of the River Nile, it must have been a wondrous sight even during the Graeco-Roman period, and one can easily understand why they felt that this man, a mortal man, should receive such endowments and glorify him. Could it be that we see here a reference to our Hebrew scholars in Alexandria? It is not presumptuous to suggest that the scribes of the Torah would have known of Hapu as this newly installed god of healing and his background. In fact, it may be that they utilized his exploits and colorful career as the main attributes of their own character, Moses.

Both Hapu and Imhotep can be seen on the exterior walls of the Ptah Temple in Karnak, where their images stand out as testaments to time. Their souls mingled as one, their power of healing acting together as one. Associated with the god Asclepius, the Greek God of medicine, they were both regarded as sons of Ptah and Thoth, both Egyptian gods that were

associated with philosophy, medicine, and wisdom. Both were a magnet for pilgrims wishing to receive their miracles of healing and blessings. A dedication on the walls of the temple at Deir el Medina on the west bank of Luxor brings them both together as one:

> The learned ones praise God for you,
> Foremost among them your brother,
> Who loves you, whom you love,
> Amenhotep son of Hapu.
> He abides with you,
> He parts not from you;
> Your bodies form a single one,
> Your Ba receive the things you love,
> Brought you by your son.
>
> —Caesar Augustus[5]

Educated first at the sacred temples of Memphis, where he was introduced to the books of Thoth and the required skills of becoming an accomplished scribe, it is most probable that he continued his training there until his promotion to high priest of Khenti-kheti, one of the chief gods worshipped in and around the city of Athribis. Afterward, we can assume that he continued his thirst for knowledge either in the confines of the temple complex of Karnak dedicated to Amun and the Theban triad, or at one of the other numerous spiritual temples in and around Egypt, most probably utilizing the religious center of Memphis as his seat of learning.

The relief on his personal statues tells us of his achievements in battle against the uprisings in Nubia, and how Pharaoh recognized his bravery and bestowed upon him new titles.[6]

Service With the King

> The Good God, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nibmare, Pharaoh Amenhotep III. I saw him fighting hand to hand upon the battlefield, while he was like Min in the year of…I recorded the numbers of his captives as subjects of the temples [missing text] & [missing text]. While I was apportioner of ointment. I was versed in her art [missing text]. and she knew it, while I was in front with my Lord, and I was great before him. I did that which men loved and Gods praised [missing text].[7]

The verse clearly shows us that he was adept not only in the use of holistic medicine and herbal remedies, but we also receive a hint of a man who adored his Pharaoh. Even if the inscription is that of a political nature, that is it favors the one who granted him the extraordinary achievement of erecting the characterized statues within the confines of Karnak, the most sacred of religious centers in ancient Egypt. It also provides us with a glimpse of a learned man who in his formative years graces the battle field with a subtle indication of naivety.

The following verses are translations of inscriptions from the third statue discovered in the southern courtyards of Karnak Temple by François Auguste Ferdinand Mariette, a 19th-century French Egyptologist. These translations were done by one of the fathers of Egyptology, James Henry Breasted, an American archaeologist and historian.

Introduction

The Kings scribe, Amenhotep Son of Hapu, triumphant; he saith: “I was great, at the head of the great, skilful in the divine words in the council of understanding, following the plans of the king; one whose Ka the sovereign, Life, Prosperity and health, advanced.”

First Promotion

The good God, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nibmare, Pharaoh Amenhotep III, firstborn son of Harakhte, praised me. I was appointed to be inferior kings scribe; I was introduced into the divine book, I beheld the excellent things of Thoth; I was equipped with their secrets; I opened all their passages; one took counsel with me on all their matters.

Second promotion

My Lord again showed favor to me; the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nibmare, Pharaoh Amenhotep III. He put all the people subject to me, and the listing of their number under my control, as Chief King’s scribe over Recruits. I levied the military classes of my Lord, my pen reckoned the numbers of millions; I put them in classes in the place of their elders; the staff of old age as his beloved son. I taxed the houses with the numbers belonging thereto, I divided the troops of workmen and their houses, I filled out the subjects with the best of the captivity, which his majesty had captured on the battlefield. I appointed all their troops, I levied [missing text] I placed troops at the heads of the way to turn back the foreigners in their places. The two regions were surrounded with a watch scouting for sand rangers. I did likewise at the heads of the river mouths, which were closed under my troops except to the troops of royal marines. I was the guide of their ways, they depended upon my command.

I was the chief at the head of the mighty men, to smite the Nubians and the Asiatics, the plans of my Lord were a refuge behind me; when I wandered his command surrounded me; his plans embraced all lands and all foreigners who were by his side. I reckoned up the captives of the victories of his majesty, being in charge of them. I did according to that which he the Pharaoh Amenhotep III said, I followed according to the things which he commanded me, and I found them excellent things for the future.

Third promotion

My Lord a third time showed favor to me; Son of Re, Pharaoh Amenhotep III, Ruler of Thebes, the Sun God is he, to whom hath been given an eternity of his jubilees without end. My Lord made me Chief of all works. I established the name of the Pharaoh forever; I did not imitate that which had been done before. I fashioned for him a mountain of grit stone, for he is the heir of Atum. I did according to my desire, executing his likeness in this his great house, with every precious stone, enduring like the heavens; there was not one who had done it the like of which since the time of the founding of his Two Lands. I conducted the work of his statue, immense in width, taller than his column; its beauty marred the pylon. Its length was 40 cubits in the august mountain of grit stone at the side of Re-Atum. I built an eight vessel, I brought it; the statue up river; it was set up in this great house, enduring as heaven. My witnesses are you, you who shall come after us; the entire army was as one under my control, they wrought with joy, their hearts were glad, rejoicing and praising the Good God; they landed at Thebes with rejoicing, the monuments rested in their places forever.[8]

Pharaoh Amenhotep III reigned from 1390 BC to 1352 BC. Most scholars, including me, place Hapu's return to Thebes at the beginning of Pharaoh Amenhotep III's ascension to the throne. In accordance with my interpretation of the various chronologies (see page 185), that would place Hapu's age at 49 years old. So for the next 34 years he served the Pharaoh with unwavering allegiance, following him on the battlefields of Nubia to the newly opened stone quarries of Deir el Bersha and Tura to the prized sandstone quarries of Gebel el Silsila in the south of Egypt. But it is his age that defines him, already an old man in comparison to other kindred brethren within Egypt when the Pharaoh took office. Now at the grand age of 78 he is still organizing the grand festivities that celebrate the 1st Sed festival of the Pharaoh. The sheer amount of responsibilities resting upon his shoulders must have been immense. Yet he accomplished the task easily and we see his prize resting in the halls of Karnak.

At the age of 80 years old he was granted the great accolade of erecting his own personal statues within Karnak Temple, as we have already discussed. The following is an inscription upon the worn papyrus that resides in the lap of his statue, translated by Siegfried Morenz in *Egyptian Religion*:

> You people of Karnak, you who wish to see Amon, come to me! I shall report your petitions. For I "am indeed the messenger of this God, Pharaoh Amenhotep III has appointed me to report the words of the Two Lands. Speak to me the 'offering spell' and invoke my name daily, as is done to one who has taken a vow."[9]

Having stared at the soft and beautifully caved statues myself, I can imagine how mesmerized one would be when embraced by such strong faith and belief, his head slightly bent toward the ground in an act of reverence. Then there are the scrolls that lay open in his lap, worn smooth by the numerous pilgrims that have touched its surface, similar to the acts of pilgrimage we see today where Christians travel thousands of miles to be in the presence of saints that possess so-called miraculous healing powers, and receive prayers of those in distress. Similar to the deified saints of Christianity, Hapu endured the test of time, and even though he signifies an age-old religion that lost its tongue within the sands of time, I still cannot help but see this correlation between the these two great Prophets. The only difference between Moses and Hapu is that the latter is proven to have existed, whereas, Moses is left to Faith and faith alone.

Even as I write this, I'm stirred with an emotional draw toward Hapu; all the research and material that surround me pulls me in the direction of this great man. Could he truly have been the inspiration for the Hebraic Moses? If he was, then he has endured time, immortalized and hidden from so many within the character of Moses. Millions of Christians and followers of other belief systems have read or heard the exploits of Moses freeing the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt. It's quite solemn, really, the mixture of emotions while writing this. But I will share more of my personal insights in a further chapter.

Hapu was the only non-royal to be given the unique opportunity to build his own Mortuary Temple, more commonly known as the House of Millions of Years on the west bank of Thebes. It is located behind that of his beloved Pharaoh Amenhotep III, where he had planned and built for his highly respected Pharaoh one of the greatest palaces to adorn Thebes. Today, the great Colossi of Memnon statues reach upward toward the skies, towering over the modern concrete buildings that line the Menmon road, standing as a testament to Hapu's glorious architectural achievements, while the remains of the temple lay scattered among the dirt behind them.

His Mortuary Temple unfortunately stands in complete ruins today, a few scanty limestone blocks lay idle and lifeless on the desert floor overshadowed

by the great mortuary temple of Medinat Habu. It is said that his temple was adorned with a pyramid and fronted by a grand lake that welcomed and accepted the visiting pilgrims who wished to place offerings to him. Today, a restaurant stands where his lake would have once graced the desert floor. One can only imagine the splendor of arriving by barge along the canal systems and finally entering the lake itself, juxtaposed against its natural environment, a fitting architectural achievement by this genius. However, all was possibly lost in the Great Flood, and what remained was later destroyed either by the angry mobs of the ruined city or the Atenists who had singled out Hapu in their quest to eradicate anything and everything to do with Amun Ra and his beloved disciples. One of his mortuary texts has survived the test of time and was handed down to us, again giving us an insight into this mortal man who became a God.

The Colossi of Memnon, Luxor.

Mortuary Edict, Inscribed on Limestone Stele

> Year 31, fourth month of the first season, sixth day, under the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, the Lord of the Two Lands, Nibmare, Life, Prosperity and Health.; Son of Re, of his body, Lord of Diadems, Pharaoh Amenhotep III, Life, Prosperity and Health.
>
> On this day, Pharaoh Amenhotep III was in the ka-chapel of the hereditary prince, count, king’s-scribe, Amenhotep Son of Hapu. There were brought in: the governor of the city,

and vizier, Amenhotep, the overseer of the treasury, Meriptah, and the king's-scribes of the army. One said to them in the presence of his majesty, Life, Prosperity and Health: "Hear the command which is given, to furnish the ka-chapel of the hereditary prince, the royal scribe, Amenhotep, called Huy, Son of Hapu, whose excellence is extolled in order to perpetuate his ka-chapel with slaves, male and female, forever; son to son, heir to heir; in order that none trespass upon it forever. It is commended to Amon-Re, king of Gods, as long as it is upon earth; he is the king of eternity, he is the protector of the dead.

As for the general and scribe of the army who shall follow after me and shall find the ka-chapel beginning to decay, together with the male and female slaves who are cultivating the field for my endowment, and shall take away a man there from in order to put him to any business of Pharaoh, Life, Prosperity and Health, or any commission, may his body be accursed. Then if another trespasses upon them, and does not answer in their behalf, he shall suffer the destruction of Amon, Lord of Thebes, he the God shall not permit them to be satisfied with the office of king's-scribe of the army, which they have received for me. He Amon shall deliver them into the flaming wrath of the king on the day of his anger; his serpent-diadem shall spit fire upon their heads, shall consume their limbs, shall devour their bodies, they shall become like Apophis on the morning of New Year›s Day. They shall be engulfed in the sea, it shall hide their corpses. They shall not receive the mortuary ceremonies of the righteous; they shall not eat the food of them that dwell in Keret; the waters by the flood of the river shall not be poured out for them. Their sons shall not be put into their places; their wives shall be violated while their eyes see it. The nobles shall not set foot in their houses as long as they are upon earth; the leaders of the two sides shall not introduce them, nor shall they hear the words of the Pharaoh in the hour of gladness. They shall belong to the sword on the day of destruction, they shall be called enemies; when their bodies be consumed, they shall hunger, without bread, and their bodies shall die. If the vizier, overseer of the treasury, chief overseer of the estate, superintendent of the granary, high priests, divine fathers, and priests of Amon, to whom has been read this edict, issued for the ka-chapel of the hereditary prince, the king's-scribe, Amenhotep, son of Hapu, shall not show solicitude for his ka-chapel, the edict shall touch them, and them especially.

But if they shall show solicitude for the ka-chapel, with the male and female slaves who are cultivating the field for my endowment, then all favor shall be shown them. Amon-Re, king of Gods, shall reward them with prosperous life. The Pharaoh of your day shall reward you is as he rewards. There shall be doubled for you office upon office, you shall receive from son to son and heir to heir. They shall be sent on as messengers, and the Pharaoh of their day will reward them. Their bodies shall rest in the West after a life of 110 years, doubled to you shall be the mortuary oblations likewise.

As for the officers of the Medjay, belonging to the district of the Mayor of the west side, in Khaft et-hir-nebes, who shall not protect my endowment each day, and on my feast-days on the first of the month, the edict shall touch them, and their bodies shall not escape. But if they shall hear the entire edict, issued as a command and they shall obey and shall not forsake it, good shall happen to them as to the just. They shall rest in the cemetery after years of old age.

The Mayor of the west side is he who my servants during a single day.[10]

Of course the one item of evidence to suggest that Hapu spent his last days in the comfort of Thebes would be his tomb, complete with his sarcophagus and funerary ware. Unfortunately it has never been located. There have been many candidates, but they have proven to be attributed to Amenhotep's other sons. Even his Mortuary Temple sits in ruins and was never used to receive his mummified corpse in readiness to be interned within his tomb. One could argue that it is yet to be found, which does not count as the evidence to suggest that he led the surviving party across the eastern deserts of Egypt, and you would be right in saying so. But I like to sit on the fence and ask the "What if?" question. There are many "What if?" questions out there, and one can lead oneself into very hot water by asking. But the evidence points me in this direction, and therefore one has to follow one's intuition in these matters.

The disappearance of other high-ranking officials and royal members only adds fuel to the fire of suspicion, which we will discuss later. But for now, Hapu has achieved what no other man has, yet for such a great man we have nowhere to place a flower, no marker. It is an unfortunate and unfitting tribute to such a man who truly represents freedom and expression.

He was a man of no equal; he commanded the respect of not only those he served, but also the army and its generals, where he held the grand title of Chief Royal Scribe over Recruits. All the quarry men and craftsmen saw him as the Chief Overseer of all Building Works under Pharaoh. He knew every square inch of Egypt, and was not afraid of its enemies; while in battle in Nubia earlier in his career, he fought for the Pharaoh with bravery and valor, and earned his respect and loyalty with bestowed titles and wealth.

The New Leader?

One of the most prized accolades to be bestowed upon him was the grand title of Hereditary Crown Prince, basically stating that he had been accepted as the son of the Pharaoh in all but name. His statues and Mortuary Temple only continues to build upon this title. Similar to the birthing chambers of the pharaohs, where they present the proof of their legitimate linage in relief upon the smooth stone surface immortalizing them forever, this honor adds a whole new meaning to the phrase "written in stone."

But this title represents even more. Is it reasonable to suggest that the survivors accepted Hapu as their new leader based not only upon his

character and reputation, but more importantly his obvious acceptance by the current Living God. Even though he sat in disgrace, the Pharaoh *did* represent Amun-Ra. This recognition or royal approval would have been, I believe, a kind of royal stamp or seal that granted Hapu the powers to intercede and possibly even lead these sorrowful victims on behalf of the royal household. It may have been suggested that Hapu take the royal children, the rightful heirs to the safety of the eastern deserts, away from harm where they could build for themselves a new life, and return to Thebes to claim their rightful position as heads of the royal household when it was more conducive to do so.

Indeed, hidden among the chaos of Thebes, with the four groups deserting the sinking ship, it was probably wise to leave. Akhanaten was on his path of destruction, the mobs and lawlessness were increasing, and the neighboring cities were unable to offer the security and aid any longer due to the continued flow of immigrants from the capital city of Thebes that were stripping their limited resources. Therefore, migrating eastward would have been the better option—an apocalyptic migration out of necessity, an Exodus of Egyptians who felt insecure and unsafe in their own environment, seeking and desiring peace.

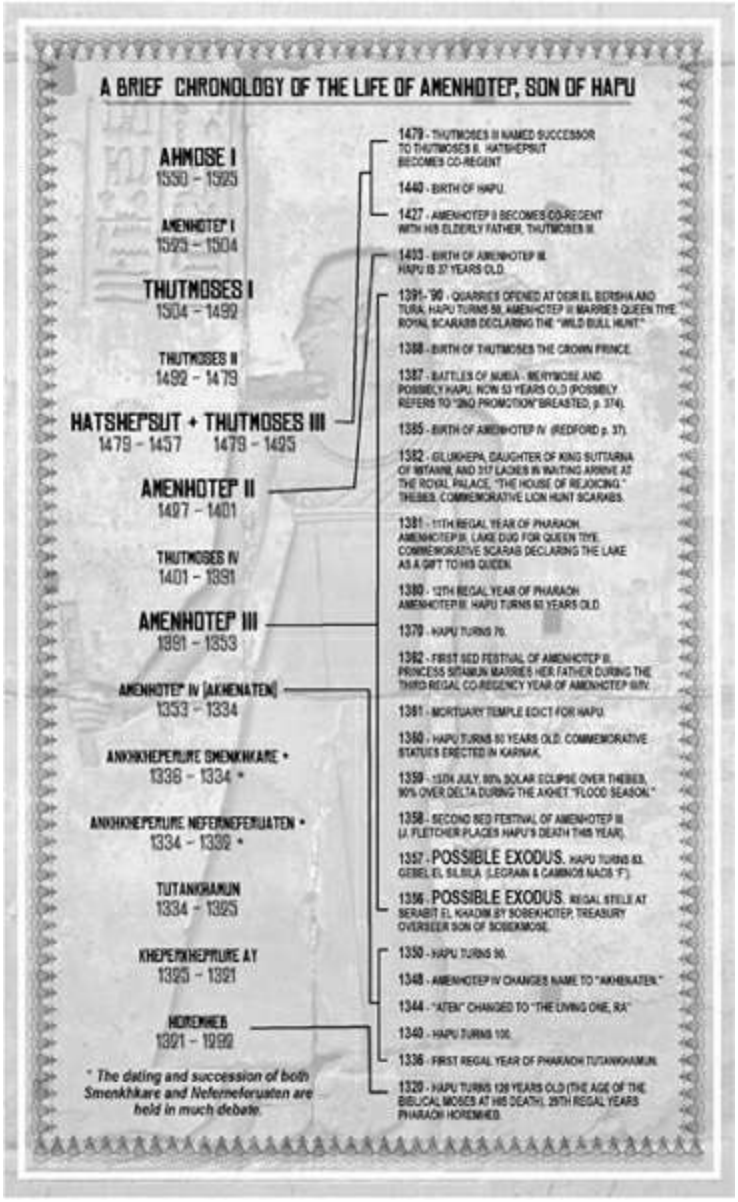
The Chronology of Hapu

On page 185, I include a chronological list of Hapu based on the dates provided by Ian Shaw's *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* and other eminent scholars within their respective fields of expertise that have contributed to the ongoing development of ancient Egyptian chronology. With added notes and theories that I have culminated into this somewhat basic but informative list, it follows the life of Hapu from his birth in Athribis to his possible death at the grand age of 120, which I have placed at this figure to correspond with the age given to Moses within the biblical scripture.

The pivotal date at age 80 is inserted, as too are the dates of his other inscriptions within his own lifetime, thus proving that he did surpass the great age of 80. But whether he continued on to the 120-year figure is pure speculation. I have merely tried to correspond with the recorded age of Moses.

East Bank of Gebel el Silsila.

The last set of inscriptions that we have as archaeological evidence of Hapu's existence, are located at Gebel el Silsila on the eastern banks.[11] Two badly damaged Naoi and several stelae that once were adorned by both Hapu and his beloved Pharaoh Amenhotep III, date to around the 35th regal year of the Pharaoh, squarely placing Hapu at the site in 1357 BC at the grand age of 83. Note that I have placed the set of the Four Exodoi between 1357 BC and 1356 BC, the 35th and 36th regal years of the Pharaoh respectively. The date of 1357 BC is also associated with the possible eighth co-regency year of Amenhotep IV prior to him changing his name, as I suggest within the chronological list.


A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF AMENHOTEP, SON OF HAPU
AHMOSE I
1550 – 1525
AMENHOTEP I
1525 – 1504
THUTMOSES I
1504 – 1492
THUTMOSES II
1492 – 1479
HATSHEPSUT + THUTMOSES III
1479 – 1457 1479 – 1425
AMENHOTEP II
1427 – 1401
THUTMOSES IV
1401 – 1391
AMENHOTEP III
1391 – 1353
AMENHOTEP IV [AKHENATEN]
1353 – 1334
ANKHKHEPERURE SMENKHKARE *
1336 – 1334 *
ANKHKHEPERURE NEFERNEFERUATEN *
1334 – 1332 *
TUTANKHAMUN
1334 – 1325
KHEPERKHEPRURE AY
1325 – 1321
HOREMHEB
1321 – 1292
* The dating and succession of both Smenkhkare and Nefernefaruaten are held in much debate.
1479 - THUTMOSES III NAMED SUCCESSOR TO THUTMOSES II. HATSHEPSUT BECOMES CO-REGENT
1440 - BIRTH OF HAPU.
1427 - AMENHOTEP II BECOMES CO-REGENT WITH HIS ELDERLY FATHER, THUTMOSES III.
1403 - BIRTH OF AMENHOTEP III. HAPU IS 37 YEARS OLD.
1391-'90 - QUARRIES OPENED AT DEIR EL BERSHA AND TURA. HAPU TURNS 50. AMENHOTEP III MARRIES QUEEN TIYE. ROYAL SCARABS DECLARING THE "WILD BULL HUNT."
1388 - BIRTH OF THUTMOSES THE CROWN PRINCE.
1387 - BATTLES OF NUBIA - MERYMOSE AND POSSIBLY HAPU. NOW 53 YEARS OLD (POSSIBLY REFERS TO "2ND PROMOTION" BREASTED, p. 374).
1385 - BIRTH OF AMENHOTEP IV. (REDFORD p. 37).
1382 - GILUKHEPA, DAUGHTER OF KING SUTTARNA OF MITANNI, AND 317 LADIES IN WAITING ARRIVE AT THE ROYAL PALACE, "THE HOUSE OF REJOICING." THEBES. COMMEMORATIVE LION HUNT SCARABS.
1381 - 11TH REGAL YEAR OF PHARAOH AMENHOTEP III. LAKE DUG FOR QUEEN TIYE. COMMEMORATIVE SCARAB DECLARING THE LAKE AS A GIFT TO HIS QUEEN.
1380 - 12TH REGAL YEAR OF PHARAOH AMENHOTEP III. HAPU TURNS 63 YEARS OLD.
1379 - HAPU TURNS 70.
1362 - FIRST SED FESTIVAL OF AMENHOTEP III. PRINCESS SITAMUN MARRIES HER FATHER DURING THE THIRD REGAL CO-REGENCY YEAR OF AMENHOTEP III/IV.
1361 - MORTUARY TEMPLE EDICT FOR HAPU.
1360 - HAPU TURNS 80 YEARS OLD. COMMEMORATIVE STATUES ERECTED IN KARNAK.
1359 - 15TH JULY, 85% SOLAR ECLIPSE OVER THEBES. 90% OVER DELTA DURING THE AKHET "FLOOD SEASON."
1358 - SECOND SED FESTIVAL OF AMENHOTEP III. (J. FLETCHER PLACES HAPU'S DEATH THIS YEAR).
1357 - POSSIBLE EXODUS. HAPU TURNS 83. GEBEL EL SILSILA. (LEGRAIN & CAMINOS NADS 'F').
1356 - POSSIBLE EXODUS. REGAL STELE AT SERABIT EL KHADIM BY SOBEKHOTEP, TREASURY OVERSEER SON OF SOBEKMOSE.
1350 - HAPU TURNS 90.
1348 - AMENHOTEP IV CHANGES NAME TO "AKHENATEN."
1344 - "ATEN" CHANGED TO "THE LIVING ONE, RA"
1340 - HAPU TURNS 100.
1336 - FIRST REGAL YEAR OF PHARAOH TUTANKHAMUN.
1320 - HAPU TURNS 120 YEARS OLD (THE AGE OF THE BIBLICAL MOSES AT HIS DEATH). 25TH REGAL YEARS PHARAOH HOREMHEB.

The stone from Gebel el Silsila may have been quarried for the construction of the temples to the Aten at Karnak or for future developments for the Pharaoh. Either way, we will never know due to the severe damage inflicted upon the relief of the items at Gebel el Silsila, both contemporary with the unmerciful attacks carried out by the Atenists and later eradication at the hands of vandals.

Erasure and Relocation

We return to Thebes' historical texts and archaeological evidence, which

provides us with material that suggests the events and characters that were involved in the ultimate rise to power of Akhenaten, his followers (Atenists), who defiled and closed the great religious temples of Egypt, vandalizing their inner sanctums, and destroying the name of Amun-Ra in their wake.

I for one can see and understand the anger and resentment in their actions, as they squarely laid the blame for the death of thousands of Thebans directly at the gates of these vast centers of religion, worship, and great power. The old gods had failed them, and they sought revenge in their grief. Fifteen years would pass under the reign of Pharaoh Akhenaten and his devout cult followers. From the safety and seclusion of his new City of Akhetaten, years of royal edicts declaring the eradication of the names of not only the old gods, but also those who followed them, as they had blindly carried out their orders from the living personification of Ra, the Pharaoh. This total erasure shows that Akhenaten had not only control over his flock, but also the allegiance of the army and the Royal Medjay, enabling him to carry out his devastating commands without the hindrance from the established old guard. These point to either the continuation of the supposed co-regency, as suggested by some, or the ultimate death of his father, Pharaoh Amenhotep III, thereby handing the wealth of Egypt over to him.

Although there is a historical character that is remiss from this scenario, Crown Prince Thutmose, who was the rightful heir to the throne of Egypt, he disappears from history at around the 31st regal year of his father the Pharaoh, circa 1361 BC. I propose that he did not die as many have suggested, even without the evidence to support such a theory, as his tomb has yet to be discovered, along with any historical text that proclaims his early demise.

I would like to offer another plausible scenario, in that he fled Thebes with Hapu as one of the royal representatives together with his older sister, the Princess Sitamun, leaving behind their father, Pharaoh Amenhotep III, and their mother, Queen Tiye.

Could it be that Crown Prince Thutmose and the Royal Wife and Princess Sitamun provide the extra characterizations for the brother of Moses? Could they be Aaron and his sister Miriam? Both show qualities and attributes that could be mistaken for the biblical characters as described to us by the Hebraic clergymen. It was Princess Sitamun who presented to her grandparents, either before their death or afterward, as part of their funerary ware a set of stunning gilded chairs that depict the dwarf god Bes, playing the tambourine, a musical instrument that is rarely seen depicted in pictorial relief scenes. It is a

loose connection, I know, but if Sitamun was a Hathoric priestess, which was almost always the case with most royal princesses, then either the sistrum or tambourine or one of the many musical instruments of that time would have been associated with her.

The biblical Miriam, the sister of Moses, is said to have played upon the tambourine when they had safely reached the eastern shore line of the Sinai, after crossing the parted Red Sea, and began singing the song of Moses in jubilation of their achievement. I merely suggest that Sitamun left Thebes with her brother and her lifelong mentor and high vizier, Hapu, as she would have been more than familiar with both, and the stench of death in Thebes may have been a contributing factor, not to mention her marriage to her father. Plus, Sitamun also disappears from the history books after the 31st regal year of her father and new husband.

Uncanny that they both disappear at the same time, and neither tomb has yet to be discovered or located. Could it be that they did indeed leave with Hapu and the rest of the migrating Egyptians?

CHAPTER TEN

Out of Egypt

THE SENENMUT THREAD

Driving across the Egyptian desert, east of Cairo and the Nile Delta, en route to the Sinai border was all at once beautiful and yet extremely boring. Not in a disinterested sort of way, but something like the feeling you get when driving through Iowa, where the first few miles of flat cornfield are a beautiful thing to behold. But at about mile marker #99, you long to see a hill or a tree or a winding river. The Egyptian desert was a lot like that: flat sandy terrain as far as the eye could see, punctuated by the occasional dune or rocky outcrop. It made us think about how that journey must have been by foot. It took us a little more than two hours to reach the Suez Canal and the Sinai border, just to the north of the Red Sea, but if I had been asked to walk that distance, carrying everything I could take with me in a pack on my back, along with my wife, my parents, my small children, and my goats, sheep, and whatever else I could put my hands on while bugging out, that trip would have been much different and much longer. Then place my little entourage in a massive, clustered line of 599,000 more groups just like mine, and you can exponentially increase the walking time by a factor of impossible to nil. Then add to the equation that we are all slaves or prisoners fleeing our overlords and masters, never quite sure if they will be in hot pursuit or not. Add to that the lack of water and food, the hot sun beating down on us, the fact that none of us, as slaves, have ever been camping or know a damned thing about desert wilderness survival techniques, and you have the makings of an epic...disaster.

MEDITERRANEAN SEA
TO CANAAN and SYRIA
NILE DELTA
GOSHEN
Wadi Tumilat
SINAI
Sea of Reeds
GIZA
MENNEFER
[Memphis]
SERABIT
EL KHADIM
RED SEA
EGYPT
N
AMARNA
W
E
S
Valley of the Kings
Deir el Bahri
Tombs of the Nobles
Medinat Habu
Deir el Medina
Ramesseum
THEBES
[Luxor]

When Moses led those people out of Egypt, he had to have a plan. The biblical passage tells us that it was all divine, with God providing the way, as well as the miraculous defense and divinely provided food from the sky and water from the rock. It would take a heaping serving of faith to swallow that story whole. But that is precisely what the biblical story offers up on a Golden Calf–shaped platter. So if this event truly took place, how are we to understand it in human terms, sans the theophanized manipulation of a divine story that turned into historical legend and finally became the stuff of religious mythology?

What really happened that first Passover morning when Moses told the Hebrews to "Be ready to leave in a moment's notice"? Planning to hike 20 people across the desert on a foot tour of sites takes weeks of preparation and meticulous planning. All Moses told the Hebrews to do was slather sheep's blood on their door posts and lintels, and be ready to head out for the Promised Land in the morning. But don't forget to go to your Egyptian neighbors tonight and tell them you want to "borrow" (wink, wink, nudge, nudge) all their gold. You aren't coming back, so the word *borrow* is a bit of a misnomer. And what is a massive population of slaves, adding up to nearly 1.2 million people, doing living mixed in with their Egyptian neighbors? And if they are all slaves, why do some of them have gold? And if this is a slave community in the land of Goshen in the fertile Nile Delta region, how close are the slaves to the non-slaves, if all you have to do is walk next door and ask for a cup of yeast—oh, and all your valuables, too? What power did the slaves have over the common folk of Egypt that they'd just give you everything you asked for?

Ah, it was the plagues. They were living in such fearful awe of you and your leader, Moses, that they'd give you the clothes off their backs if you asked, just to get rid of you and not suffer anymore at the hand of your god.

Although I am being slightly tongue-in-cheek here, doesn't this make you stop and think about how it all really came down? How were the logistics carried out? Which way did they go and what was the plan when they crossed the border with the pyramids in the rear-view mirror? To some this can sound like an adventure, but to others, this would be a veritable hell.

Imagine that you are so poor that you don't even amount to impoverished. Your bodies are blackened by the desert sun, and the sweat of your labor

stings in the wounds left by the lashes you received by your taskmaster earlier today. The only parts of your body left without color are your mud-covered legs that were sunk into the mud pits while making bricks—thousands and thousands of bricks every day to meet your tally, relentlessly stomping the straw and stubble into the mud to add strength to the final dried product.

Imagine carrying dried brick to the boats or the carts for transport around the country, or imagine being part of a crew that hauls blocks of quarried stones, dragging massive sandstone blocks weighing hundreds of tons. The work is hot, sweaty, and draining. And all you have to look forward to is the next day where it will all be the same, over and over and over again. You are not a human being; you are a slave. The only care you receive is as a commodity, a cog in the great machine that is the building power of Egypt.

HATSHEPSUT

WHEN HER STEPSON/NEPHEW, THUTMOSES III, WAS TOO YOUNG TO ASCEND THE THRONE ALONE, HATSHEPSUT BECAME HIS CO-REGENT. BUT WITHIN SIX YEARS, SHE NAMED HERSELF “KING” AND RULED AS THE PHARAOH OF OF EGYPT CLAIMING THAT IT HAD BEEN THE WILL OF HER FATHER THAT SHE SHOULD REIGN.

IT IS SCOTTY’S CONTENTION THAT THIS REMARKABLE WOMAN WAS NONE OTHER THAN THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH THUTMOSES I, THE SAME “PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER” MENTIONED IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS, AND THAT IT WAS SHE WHO FOUND THE BABY MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES ON THE NILE’S BANKS.

HATSHEPSUT’S TEMPLE DJESER DJESERU AT DEIR EL BAHRI
LUXOR, EGYPT

CARTOU CHE OF THUTMOSES III FROM DEIR EL BAHRI

ALL PHOTOS IN THIS SECTION COURTESY OF THE AUTHORS

SENENMUT

SENENMUTWAS A COMMONER WHO BECAME HER DAUGHTER, NEFRURE; GRAND VIZIER OF EGYPT; “MOTHER’S BROTHER”; HEREDITERY CROWN PRINCE OF EGYPT, ALONG WITH 88 OTHER TITLES BESTOWED ON HIM BY HATSHEPSUT. AS HER ROYAL ARCHITECT HE WAS SAID TO HAVE BUILT DJESER DJESERU, HATSHEPSUT’S TEMPLE AT DEIR EL BAHRI, AND LEFT BEHIND AT LEAST TWO UNFINISHED TOMBS OF HIS OWN.

SENENEMUT COMPLETELY DISAPPEARED FROM EGYPTIAN HISTORY WITHOUT A TRACE, LEAVING BEHIND TWO UNUSED, UNFINISHED TOMBS. ALL IMAGES OF BOTH HE AND HATSHEPSUT WERE ERADICATED BY AMENHOTEP II, SON OF THUTMOSES III.

SENENMUT LEFT BEHIND NINE STATUES OF HIMSELF HOLDING HATSHEPSUT'S ROYAL DAUGHTER, NEFRURE, IN A LOVING EMBRACE.

SCOTTY EMERGES FROM A TOMB HIGH IN THE NORTHERN CLIFF FACE ABOVE DEIR EL BAHRI, WHERE, UNTOUCHED FOR NEARLY 3,500 YEARS, ANCIENT PORNOGRAPHIC GRAFFITI DEPICTING SENENMUT AND HATSHEPSUT STILL ADORNS THE WALLS OF THE CHAMBER, WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY USED AS A REST HOUSE BY ANCIENT WORKERS ON THE TEMPLE BELOW.

THE AUTHORS STAND BENEATH THE MUD BRICK ARCH ENTRANCE TO THE TOMB OF MONTUEMHAT, THE FOURTH PROPHET OF AMUN (TT34), WITH DEIR EL BAHRI IN THE BACKGROUND.

THE NORTHERN CLIFF FACE ABOVE DEIR EL BAHRI

TEMPLE OF AMENHOTEP II PHARAOH OF THE EXODUS KARNAK TEMPLE COMPLEX, LUXOR, EGYPT

BACKGROUND: FROM THE WALLS OF DEIR EL BAHRI, HATSHEPSUT'S TEMPLE

SERABIT EL KHADIM

ABOUT 30 MILES EAST OF THE RED SEA IN THE HEART OF THE SINAI WILDERNESS LIES THE “MOUNTAIN OF GOD” SPOKEN OF IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS. ATOP ITS PLATEAU ARE THE ANCIENT RUINS OF THE TEMPLE OF HATHOR, THE COW GODDESS OF EGYPT.

IT WAS ON THE DESERT FLOOR BELOW THAT THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL MADE A GOLDEN CALF TO WORSHIP IN THE ABSENCE OF MOSES, WHO HAD GONE TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP TO CARVE THE TABLETS OF THE LAW ON STELE, WHICH WERE ENGRAVED ON BOTH SIDES.

RUINS OF THE TEMPLE OF HATHOR ATOP SERABIT EL KHADIM

BACKGROUND IMAGE: THE CLIMB UP SERABIT EL KHADIM AND STELE (INSET).

HATHOR ATOP SERABIT EL KHADIM

CAVE OF HATHOR

THE AUTHORS AT THE TEMPLE OF HATHOR

THE AUTHORS “ENGAGED” IN MUD BRICK MAKING

DR. WARD DESCENDING THE “NILEOMETER” AT MEDINAT HABU

BACKGROUND IMAGE: THE WALLS OF THE TOMB OF RAMOSE, TOMBS OF THE NOBLES, LUXOR, EGYPT

FROM THUTMOSES III'S SANCTUARY AT KARNAK, ONE CAN SEE HATSHEPSUT'S DEIR EL BAHRI THREE MILES AWAY, STRAIGHT WEST ACROSS THE NILE, THROUGH THE DOORWAY OF THE SACRED BARQUE SANCTUARY.

AVENUE OF SPHINXES LUXOR TEMPLE

KARNAK TEMPLE

SCOTTY ROBERTS AND DR. JOHN WARD STANDING AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE SIXTH PYLON

And there is despair. There are no songs from home, because this is your home, and has been your peoples' home for the last 300 years. There is nothing but hope that you will someday be freed, or someday die. That is your existence, which is spoken about in Exodus 1:12–14:

> 12b ...the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites 13 and worked them ruthlessly. 14 They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

According to the biblical account, Moses/Senenmut fled Egypt after killing the task master he witnessed beating a Hebrew. The passage in Exodus 1:15 tells us that "when the pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from pharaoh and went to live in Midian."

A tally of Semitic slaves and their task masters, also found in Rekhmire's tomb, Tombs of the Nobles, Luxor.

Is this passage speaking of Hatshepsut? Was it she who wanted to take the life of Moses in exchange for the life of a task master who was one step above the status of a slave? Or was this task master someone of greater status than the Bible tells? Rekhmire, Grand Vizier of Egypt under the reign of Thutmoses III, was someone who held great rank, but was also referred to as a task master who held the rod with which a worker would be beaten if he did not keep up with his tasks. Now, for the record, I am not suggesting that Rekhmere was the task master killed by Moses, as he lived through the end of Thutmoses' reign and into the reign of his successor, his son Amenhotep II. But I only cite the Grand Vizier as an example of someone who could also be literarily referred to as a taskmaster,[1] albeit the one that is at the highest level or nobility over all other officials. What I am suggesting is the possibility that Moses murdered someone who was much higher up in the chain of

command, and that could be a reason he was facing pharaonic retribution.

Pharaoh Thutmoses III.

The other reason Pharaoh was going to kill him is because this wasn't Hatshepsut at all, but the co-regent, deposed pharaoh, Thutmoses III. When Moses/Senenmut murdered the task master, he exploited the Semitic blood of Moses as an example of what the Hebrew slaves were capable of and justified eliminating his political opponent. Again, this is speculative but highly probable under the political circumstances that existed at this time in Egypt.

So, Moses/Senenmut flees into hiding. He ends up in Midian, which still remains a mystery region today, but it is assumed it is in the northeast Sinai, but some have placed it in the Sudan to the south of Egypt. It is here that Moses marries the daughter of the pagan high priest, Jethro, named Tzipporah. He lives as a shepherd for the next four decades. No matter what the facts are behind the murder of the task master, it is clear that Moses/Senenmut is completely content with his decision to never see Egypt again. Yet, Midian seems like such a close place, logistically, to hide out. By car, it is a handful of hours through desert highways. By foot, however, it is weeks of travel along the ancient trade routes.

After 40 years in Midian, the memories of Egypt more than likely faded

to a burning picture in Moses' mind. But Midian was not so backwater that it would not have received news of what was happening in the world. It may not have come often, but it was sure to have reached the tents of the high priest and sheik of Midian, who no doubt conducted trade with traveling merchants and caravans. But Moses, it seems, was oblivious to the politics back in Egypt, for when at the burning bush, he recited to God his excuse that he could return to Egypt on account of the pharaoh seeking to kill him there. God seemingly had to assure Moses that all who were seeking his life were dead and buried.

I am never one to want to explain away the miracles of the Bible. Academia and science would have one believe that those are merely things of a faith-based approach, and they are given no real credence in the search for fact. As a pragmatist and researcher, I want to know if the entire story bears the weight of fact and is sustainable by historical evidence, and that includes the biblical passages that speak to miracles and wondrous deeds of the Divine. But in so doing, to remain an out-of-the-box thinker, I would have to come to a different conclusion regarding the deity in the biblical text. As a pragmatist, if I am going to accept that one deity has miraculous abilities, I would have to acquiesce that other deities in other religions may also have equal abilities, so generally, the scholarly academic will side-step the entire issue and look for more solid answers that fall handily outside the realm of divine magicks. But in this case, I think it is important to take a brief look at Moses' epiphany at the burning bush in Exodus 3:1–15:

> 1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he
> led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2
> There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses
> saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go
> over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."
>
> 4 When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the
> bush, "Moses! Moses!"
>
> And Moses said, "Here I am."
>
> 5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are
> standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of
> Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he
> was afraid to look at God.

7 The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them
crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I
have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out
of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home
of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9 And now the cry
of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing
them. 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of
Egypt.”

11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites
out of Egypt?”

12 And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have
sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this
mountain.”

13 Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your
fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell
them?”

14 God said to Moses, “I am that I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am
has sent me to you.’”

15 God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the
God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’”

Although at first reaction, one might be tempted to ask Moses what brand of peyote they were selling over there in Midian, it is clear that he is recording his own, personal spiritual experience. He is the only one there, and no one else hears or sees what he is experiencing.

Serabit el Khadim, the “Holy Mountain of God” from the book of Exodus.

There are a couple of interesting things to take note of in this passage. Now, as I mentioned previously, I am not one to offhandedly reject the notion of a miracle, nor am I one to dismiss the possibility of the Divine, but those are things that create quagmires all on their own when you engage in historical research.

When John Ward and I were in the Sinai in January 2013, we had the privilege and unique experience of visiting a mountain that we both believe is the “Holy Mountain of God” mentioned in the Exodus passages. We drove from Cairo straight east to the northern tip of the Red Sea, driving beneath the Suez Canal and crossing the border into Egyptian Sinai, approximating on paved highway the route the Hebrews took when leaving Egypt (which I believe began in the Delta region from the biblical land of Goshen, the place given to the sons of Jacob/Israel under the watchful eye of Joseph). We then turned south and followed the traditional path of the Hebrews along the eastern coastal road for about an hour and then turned inland to the east for another hour or so. Situated there is a low mountain with a flat plateau on top. At one end of the plateau are the ancient ruins of the Temple/Sanctuary of Hathor, the Egyptian cow goddess of joy, feminine love, and motherhood. We spent the night as guests of Bedouin Sheik Barakat, who put us up in one of his tattered-but-sturdy Bedouin tents, which I suppose was just fine for the climate. We were fed a sumptuous meal, and given pillows and thick camel hair blankets to wrap up in on the cool desert floor. In the morning, we climbed to the top of Serabit el Khadim, a mountain that served as a sanctuary memorial site for the workers in the surrounding copper and turquoise mines. We also met with a guardian of the Egyptian government named Moustafa Rezek. He is a man who has archaeological authority over the entirety of the Sinai and hiked with us up the side of the mountain, taking us to the top.

John Ward and Scotty Roberts with their host, Sheik Barakat, at Serabit el Khadim.

On the way up, the young college-aged lads who worked for Rezek walked alongside me as we neared the top. Their English was a bit rough, but we communicated just fine. We got into small talk, and they humored me by calling me a "great steed" for my tenacity in climbing to the top. (As a side note, these boys could have run up and down that mountain twice before I ever made it to the top—oh, to be young again!) I asked them if they meant "great stud!" They nodded their heads and said, "Yes! Great steed!" So I let it go at that. But what happened next is the important point I want to make here. One of the boys stepped off the path and bent low to pick a handful of some sort of white, thorny-looking plant. He brought it to me and said—without having any idea of what we were writing in this book—"Do you know what this is? It is a plant that is very valuable to us (Bedouins). You know why? You can light it and it never stops burning. Good for long time."

My mind, as you can probably predict before reading the next line, went directly to the burning bush passage in Exodus: a bush that burns but is not consumed.

Now, as I stated, I am not one to explain away the miracles of one religion or another, but when you can find indirect yet plausible answers to biblical miracles, it just seems to establish plausibility. Although I wouldn't mind finding proof of the miraculous, this little tidbit of information seemed to not only solidify a small part of the biblical story for me, but it seemed to

have a bolstering affect on my faith.

I found myself asking if perhaps what happened to Moses was a spiritual experience that took place at a fire built of this stuff. Sure, it doesn't explain anything, nor does it add or detract from the biblical narrative, but it certainly made me consider the possibilities.

So, Moses hears God's voice and he starts to make excuses to this presence in this burning bush disguise. Then, in a bid to find the secret name of God, which is part of many ancient cultures' spirituality—the gods have secret names, and if you can find out what they are and speak them, you can have some power over that deity—so Moses asks the question, "Who shall I say sent me?" And God answers in a very peculiar way, "Tell them 'I Am' sent you. 'I am That I Am.'"

I was reading a recent article by Egyptologist and author David Rohl. He was writing about the Tower of Babel, and made reference to Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush. He had some very interesting linguistics on this phrase "I Am That I Am."

> Sumerian literature identifies the god who warns Gilgamesh of the impending flood as Enki... Enki's Akkadian name was Ea (pronounced Eya). The Hittites referred to him simply as Ya.
>
> If we translate the mysterious "I am who I am" of Exodus 3:14 back into Hebrew we discover perhaps the most remarkable of all biblical plays on words. What Moses heard was "eya(h) asher eya(h)"—the "h"s are silent. This does indeed mean "I am who I am" but it can also be translated as "I am the one who is called Eya." This gives a whole new meaning to God's subsequent instruction to Moses. When the exiled prince of Egypt says "Behold, if I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The god of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is his name?' what am I to tell them?" the reply from the burning bush is: "This is what you are to say to the Israelites, 'Eya (not 'I am') has sent me to you.' You are to tell the Israelites, 'Yahweh, the god of your ancestors, the god of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has sent me to you.'"
>
> Yahweh was, from that moment, to become the new name of the Mesopotamian deity whose original Semitic name was Eya. The god of the Hebrew ancestors can thus be traced back to a great Sumerian deity...whose most important title was Enki, the "Lord of the Earth."[2]

Moses incorporated into his building of the Jewish religion everything he learned in life, from Egyptian to Sumerian. And here we have just learned how it was that he incorporated so much Sumerian literature into building Judaism: It was the same god that he had found in the cuneiform tablets. In a

very real sense, God in the form of the burning bush just announced to Moses, “I am that Enki they have spoken of! That god Enki, known as Ea, is really ME! That’s what you tell the Children of Israel.”

I have maintained that when Moses left Egypt, although born of Hebrew blood, he was thoroughly Egyptian. I use the same comparison when I say that although my blood is Welsh/Scot, I am thoroughly American, as my family has lived in this land since my ancestors settled here 300 years ago. Moses brought with him all the wealth of the Egyptian royal educational system, and he combined that with everything he was to learn in Midian during the next 40 years of his life regarding the different cultures of the area and the religions of the Sinatics, the Canaanites, the Syrians, and everyone in between.

The Return

Empowered by his faith in God, into the courts of Pharaoh marches Moses and his older brother Aaron. Moses demands that Pharaoh let his people go.

But on the way back to Egypt, we find a very odd passage in Exodus 4:21–26, and there is a lot of debate over what really happened:

> 21 The Lord said to Moses, “When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. 22 Then say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, 23 and I told you, “Let my son go, so he may worship me.” But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.’”
>
> 24 At a lodging place on the way, the Lord met Moses[b] and was about to kill him. 25 But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son’s foreskin and touched Moses’ feet with it.[c] “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me,” she said. 26 So the Lord let him alone. (*At that time she said “bridegroom of blood,” referring to circumcision.*)
>
> —Exodus 4:21–26 (*Authors’ note*)

This one might be best left for theological debate, but not anyone I have queried on this passage is sure of its direct meaning. However, the one meaning that keeps rising to the top, and it is very legalistic in nature, is that Moses had been disobedient for not circumcising his son in accordance with the Law. The only problem is that the Law did not yet exist, as it was Moses

who was to record it later. So, apparently, according to some theologians, we are to read more into the account than what it actually tells us, and the God of the Old Testament was the kind of God that would bully those he called to follow him. I don't read anything in the passage where God, in all his glorious conversation with Moses from the burning bush, says anything to him about circumcising his son or Moses' life would taken. That might sound a bit cynical and harsh, but if you have a better translation of this passage, we'd certainly be open to hearing about it. So we'll simply leave this one standing as is. It's a clearly religious issue taking place in the passage, and although it may be pertinent to the biblical story, it has little bearing—at surface value—to the more archaeological questions for which we are seeking answers.

Let My People Go!

Moses confronts the Pharaoh, who at this time is the son of Thutmoses III, Amenhotep II. It is not clear whether he knows who Moses is (at least the biblical passage says nothing about that), but it is not outside the realm of probability that if he knows anything about Hatshepsut, he also knows of Moses/Senenmut. As a matter of fact, it is he, Amenhotep II, who takes it upon himself to eradicate all the images of both Hatshepsut and Senenmut. Could this be something he does after his encounters with Moses? After the loss of their Hebrew slaves? The timing is right, as Moses returns to Egypt only a year or two after the death of Thutmoses III, and perhaps all the stories of Hatshepsut and Senenmut are still ringing in the ears of Amenhotep II. Perhaps the reappearance of Senenmut as Moses, 40 years later, spurs the young Pharaoh into action against their images on the walls of Karnak and Djeser Djeseru at Deir el Bahri.[3]

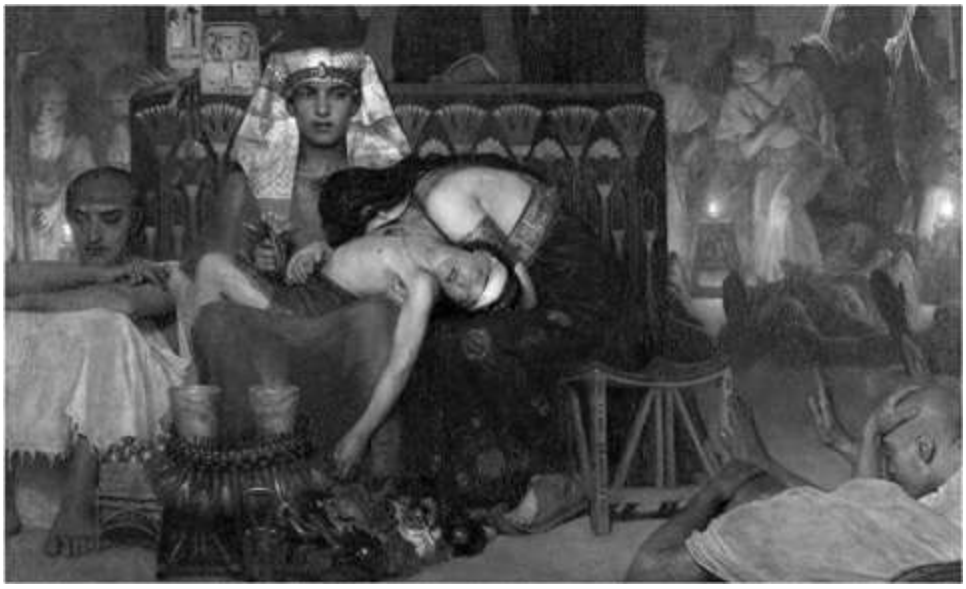
Scotty at Karnak Temple with Amenhotep II, his candidate for Pharaoh of the Exodus.

So, Moses and Aaron have an audience with the Pharaoh, demanding he let the Israelites go free. Amenhotep II of course refuses, and a series of plagues are unleashed on Egypt with each successive plague.

Now, in contrast with John, it is my belief that the entire plague scenario and Exodus took place from the Nile Delta area, and the land of Goshen where the Hebrews lived in a not-too-distant proximity from the northern capitol of Mennfer (Memphis). If the scriptural story bears any sort of linguistic weight, we are told that Moses came to and fro rather freely and rather quickly. If he had to traverse the 400-plus miles between Goshen and Thebes for each successive meeting with Amenhotep II, this process could have taken years. But as it is, the biblical accounting seems to indicate a number of weeks transpired as opposed to months or even years.

The Ten Plagues is one of those stories that so smacks of religious mythology, it gets overlooked in analysis very easily. Some have even tried to maintain that the story is true, but just a situation where Moses relied on natural occurrence rather than divine intervention, but believing that Moses was lucky enough to have a series of strange natural occurrences all happen in a row—as well as some of the explanations concocted to describe these

possible natural occurrences—takes more faith to believe than simply adhering to a belief that a Divine Power caused miraculous events to happen out of nothing.



"Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the female slave..." *Death of the Pharaoh's Firstborn Son* by Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1872.

The biblical account lists Ten Plagues that befell Egypt as a result of Amenhotep's refusal to release the Hebrew slaves:

1. Water Turned to Blood (Exodus 7:14–25)
2. Frogs (Exodus 8:1–15)
3. Lice (Exodus 8:16–19)
4. Flies (Exodus 8:30–32)
5. Cattle Disease (Exodus 9:1–7)
6. Boils (Exodus 9:8–12)
7. Hail of Fire (Exodus 9:13–19)
8. Locusts (Exodus 10:1–20)
9. Darkness (Exodus 10:21–29)
10. Death of the Firstborn (Exodus 12:29–33)

There is one odd, little piece of papyrus that has fallen under great scrutiny in regard to its possible linkage to the miraculous events of Exodus,

and that is the Ipuwer Papyrus.

The Ipuwer Papyrus

This much-disputed artifact is a single papyrus containing an ancient Egyptian poem, called "The Admonitions of Ipuwer"[4] or "The Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All."[5]

The papyrus is both unique and under debate because it so closely resembles the events associated with the biblical story of the Ten Plagues—and when *anything* gets close to looking too biblical, it is going to fall under much more scrutiny. In the story we are told of chaos in Egypt, of the world turning upside down, of warfare, famine, death, and poverty, and of a world where the servants and slaves run free and rebellion ensues.

The date of the poem remains completely unknown, but the one surviving copy that still exists is a copy that dates back to the 13th century BC, no later than the 19th Dynasty. But the poem is thought to be much older.

The papyrus contains some startling similarities to the Exodus account:

> Papyrus 2:10—"The river is blood."
>
> Exodus 7:20—"...all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood."

> Papyrus 4:14, 6:1—"Trees are destroyed. No fruit nor herbs are found."

Exodus 9:25—"...and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field."

> Papyrus 2:10—"Forsooth, gates, columns and walls are consumed by fire."
>
> Exodus 9:23–24—"...the fire ran along the ground....there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous."

> Papyrus 9:11—"The land is not light...."

Exodus 10:22—"...and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt."

Papyrus 4:3, 5:6, 6:12—"Forsooth, the children of princes are dashed against the walls. Forsooth, the children of princes are cast out in the streets."

Exodus 12:29—"And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon."

As you can imagine, the Egyptologists and archaeologist had a field day with this papyrus, and the various theories range from the papyrus describing the conditions of the Egyptians while under the northern domination of the Hyksos, to parts of the papyrus thought to be addressing the Pharaoh Khety of the 13th Dynasty, and the admonitions contained therein as addressing the god Atum, not a singular human king.

The likelihood that this particular document is an actual accounting of the plagues that would have befallen Egypt under the reign of Amenhotep II in the year 1446 BC is probably unlikely, and the biblical account is more than likely the only surviving account of what happened, so it has to remain in the realm of "biblical myth" as opposed to verifiable fact.

There is no direct evidence, and scarcely any secondary archaeological evidence for the Ten Plagues as they occurred in the biblical tale. This is one that has to remain in the realm of faith, for the present.

The Ipuwer Papyrus, by the way, has been much vaunted by the UFO community in that they take certain events listed in the document—rings of fire that appear in the sky—and attribute them to their own brand of ufological mythology. So, if you are a believer in scripture and/or a believer in UFO phenomena, this is your document. But there is no evidence that it is anything other than a legendary poem out of antiquity.

Grand Vizier Rekhmire

There is, however, an interesting theory regarding the pharaoh who presided during the period of the Ten Plagues, and this is put forward in *The Secret of Qumran* by R.P. BenDedek.[6]

It is BenDedek's contention that the pharaoh of the Exodus is not really the pharaoh at all, but the representative of the pharaoh, as in his Grand

Vizier who is the *Pharaoh pro tempore* in his absence. He places the Plagues and the Exodus under the reign of Amenhotep II, but contends that Amenhotep II was away campaigning at war during the time of the Plagues and the release of the Hebrew slaves. And when he returns his wrath falls squarely on the shoulders of his old Grand Vizier, Rekhmire.[7, 8]

The cornerstone to this theory rests on a literal interpretation of "The Song of Moses and Miriam" found in Exodus 15:1–21. If the individual lines are taken literally, the song tells of how the Pharaoh and his chariots were all buried in the closing walls of the parted Red Sea, and how they all drowned. The problem is that if Amenhotep II is the pharaoh of the Exodus, he lived past the date of the Exodus and ruled for another 29 years.

Shirat HaYam, The Song of the Sea
Also known as, The Song of Moses and Miriam

1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:

"I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.

2 "The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

3 The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name.

4 Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the sea. The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea.[b]

5 The deep waters have covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone.

6 Your right hand, Lord, was majestic in power. Your right hand, Lord, shattered the enemy.

7 "In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble.

8 By the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up. The surging waters stood up like a wall; the deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea.

9 The enemy boasted, 'I will pursue, I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils; I will gorge myself on them. I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them.'

10 But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

11 Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

12 “You stretch out your right hand, and the earth swallows your enemies.

13 In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.

14 The nations will hear and tremble; anguish will grip the people of Philistia.

15 The chiefs of Edom will be terrified, the leaders of Moab will be seized with trembling, the people of Canaan will melt away;

16 terror and dread will fall on them. By the power of your arm they will be as still as a stone—until your people pass by, Lord, until the people you bought pass by.

17 You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance—the place, Lord, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, Lord, your hands established.

18 “The Lord reigns for ever and ever.”

19 When Pharaoh’s horses, chariots and horsemen went into the sea, the Lord brought the waters of the sea back over them, but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground.

20 Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron’s sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing.

21 Miriam sang to them: “Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.”

BenDedek speaks a bit conspiratorially when he suggests that a dating system known as “The King’s Calendar” is really an obfuscated calendar meant to conceal the true history of Israel:

> The King’s Calendar position is not that of such people, but rather that the Biblical Records are in fact reliable historical records. They do nevertheless contain errors, and more importantly as the King’s Calendar research demonstrates, contain a chronology that was designed to conceal the exact and true chronological history of Israel. In demonstrating that the Exodus occurred in the 18th Egyptian Dynasty (15th century BCE), the King’s Calendar computer generated mathematical calendar indicates that the Mosaic Exodus occurred in 1449 BCE, with the Israelites crossing over into Canaan in 1412 BCE.
>
> Traditional dating for the 18th Egyptian Dynasty, (although academics have yet to agree with each other), definitely indicates that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was either Thutmoses III or Amenhotep II. The King’s Calendar demonstrates that it was Pharaoh Amenhotep II.
>
> As he did not die in any crossing of the Red Sea (a challenge itself to Biblical Infallibility), some explanation must be found for the Israelite rejoicing at Pharaoh’s demise in the Red Sea. But does the Bible actually say that Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea?[9]

The main premise of this theory is that Pharaoh Amenhotep II, out on campaign, leaves Grand Vizier Rekhmire in charge, who has the power to be Pharaoh in Amenhotep's absence, much like Joseph wielded the power of the Pharaoh when he was the Grand Vizier of Egypt.[10] Rekhmire had been the Grand Vizier and in service to the father of Amenhotep—Thutmoses II—for 54 years, and was well-established as a councilor to the pharaohs. Of course Amenhotep, the young, boisterous, egotistical, wrathful Pharaoh that he was know to be, would just as soon clean out the cupboards and build everything new in his own image and under his own hand. So Rekhmire, whether a victim of the close personal wrath of Amenhotep, or as the "Pharaoh" sent by Amenhotep to pursue the fleeing slaves, found a bitter end to his otherwise glorious and lengthy career. His death is a mystery, but it is suspected that he fell out of favor for some disgrace and this precipitated an "unnatural" demise at the hands of Pharaoh Amenhotep II. Perhaps it was the loss of the entire Hebrew slave population that is at the core. According to this theory, Grand Vizier Rekhmire is actually the Pharaoh of the Exodus who was not really the Pharaoh. It seems that Amenhotep II had no idea the Hebrews had left, and had to be informed. A few biblical passages in Exodus 14:5–12 illustrate this point:

> 5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, "What have we done? We have let the Israelites go and have lost their services!" 6 So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him. 7 He took six hundred of the best chariots, along with all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them. 8 The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly. 9 The Egyptians—all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, horsemen[a] and troops—pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they camped by the sea near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon.
>
> 10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. 11 They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

Amenhotep II was also concerned that the Exodus may have been procured by the use of the magick arts, as indicated in Josephus Antiquities 2:15:3.

> "But the Egyptians soon repented that the Hebrews were gone; and the king also was

mightily concerned that this had been procured by the magic arts of Moses. So they resolved to go after them."

But also according to Josephus, the Hebrews—nearly 1.2 million in number fleeing Egypt—were pursued by Pharaoh's army that was "600 chariots, 50,000 horsemen and 250,000 foot soldiers all armed." So roughly 300,600 soldiers strong was Pharaoh's army that pursued the escaping Hebrews.

That is quite a horde. And they all supposedly bottlenecked at the Red Sea. It seems to me that these biblical and ancient historical documents have a way with distorting numbers. But that is not to say that the event did not take place.

The Crossing of the Sea of Reeds

There is no historical data to lend any archaeological or historical veracity to this biblical account, other than the pages of scripture itself. What we do know is that the Hebrews did not cross at the wide expanse of the Red Sea, but rather at a place referred to as the *yam suph*, most probably identified with the Lake Timsah region, a few miles to the north end of the Red Sea. A mistranslation in the Septuagint renders *yam suph* as the Red Sea, when in reality it says the Reed Sea or Sea of Reeds.[11] This is a region just north of the Red Sea where the waters flow into salt lakes, but it is very shallow and could actually be crossed on foot.

If you are open to miracles, then anything is possible. The Hebrews would have come to the lake or to the larger expanse of the Red Sea and God would have parted the waters and closed them up on the pursuing Egyptian army of 300,600 soldiers, because the passage says they all were drowned in the closing of the sea.

However, there are other possibilities, in that the Sea of Reeds was passable by foot, and it has been an observable event that sometimes in the spring and summer, strong winds can dry portions of the shallow lake, and you walk across on the dried-out bottom of the lake. The biblical passage tells us that Moses stretched his staff over the waters and that a strong east wind blew all night and parted the waters. Read this dramatic passage from Exodus 14:10–31:

10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians,

marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. 11 They said to Moses, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Didn’t we say to you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians’? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!”

13 Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. 14 The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

15 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. 16 Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. 17 I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. 18 The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.”

19 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, 20 coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

23 The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. 24 During the last watch of the night the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. 25 He jammed the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, “Let’s get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.”

26 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen.” 27 Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the Lord swept them into the sea. 28 The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

29 But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. 30 That day the Lord saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. 31 And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

Our ultimate goal here is to attempt to find plausible historical evidence for these events. When we are in the palaces of Egypt, this is much easier, as

we can focus on people and places. But when you get to deciphering things that are miraculous events that might be able to be explained by natural occurrences, you might end up with plausibility, but what does that do to the faith element of the tale?

To suggest that 1.2 million fleeing slaves plus another 300,600 Egyptian soldiers with 600 chariots and 50,000 horses all entered the Sea of Reeds in one single night, you are stretching not only the bounds of the imagination, but also the limits of physics.

The Holy Mountain of God

After the successful crossing of the Sea of Reeds, the Hebrews head south to avoid the Philistines to the north. The easiest passage would be to turn north and walk across the northern Negev, right into what is southern Israel today. But instead, they turn south and march down the eastern shore of the Red Sea. Of course, it has been established that there existed at this time a line of Egyptian forts along the Negev at the north of the Sinai peninsula. Turning north would have run the Hebrews directly into several defensive stations of the Egyptian army who were probably already on the alert for them. So the Hebrews turn south and veer inland at what is now the approximate area of the seaside town of Abu Zenima, and travel about 25 miles to a mountain known as Serabit el Khadim. Atop this mountain lay the ruins of the Temple Sanctuary of Hathor, the cow goddess of Egypt, bringer of joy and motherly love.

Sir Flinders Petrie was a British Egyptologist and pioneer of systematic methodology in archaeology and the preservation of historical artifacts. He was also the first chair of Egyptology in Great Britain, and personally excavated and catalogued many of the most important archaeological sites in Egypt. It was his contention that Serabit el Khadim was the Holy Mountain of God mentioned throughout the biblical Exodus account. But he encountered resistance when he suggested that Moses went there to visit the priests who lived there rather than encounter the presence of God. So Serabit el Khadim was scratched off the list as a candidate for the biblical Mt. Sinai by many late-19th- and early-20th-century archaeologists and historians.

The long escarpment atop Serabit el Khadim, where the processional route would lead to the outer gate of the Temple of Hathor seen in the distance.

As I began to account at the beginning of this chapter, John and I climbed to the top of Serabit el Khadim and we walked the escarpment surrounded by the haze of Sinatic mountain peeks all around us. The sun was shining but there was the continual rising mist of dust and blowing sand that cast the entire mountaintop in filtered light, even at midday. The place had a calm, almost melancholic enchantment with a decidedly ethereal feel. Above all else it was incredibly quiet as we cleared a small hillock and saw the ruins of Hathor's Temple at the far end of the escarpment. The ruins were magnificent in their decay. Obvious signs of earthquake were all around the debris. The mountain was obviously not always this quiet.

Though John and I bring differing views of who Moses was and when the events of the Exodus took place, we both agree that lonely, desolate, remote mountaintop was the place where Moses climbed to visit the priests of Hathor, and ritually cleansed himself as he had done here at other times in his former life as a Prince of Egypt. It was here on this mountaintop that he carved the small stele of the tablets of the Law and carried them back down to the waiting horde of Hebrews camped in the basin and wadis below, who had built a representation of the god who had just a week earlier delivered them from the hands of the Egyptian soldiers—Hathor, the Egyptian god of joy, feminine love, and motherhood. Here in this mountainous region of the Sinai desert wilderness, surrounded by copper and turquoise mines, she was also known as Patron God of Miners.

Moses was apoplectic when he learned that the people who he had just led out of Egypt in the name of Yahweh, the new god who revealed himself to Moses through the fires of the burning bush that was not consumed, were so soon reverted back to their Egyptian ways and their Egyptian understanding of God. As a result, Moses dealt with them harshly in Exodus

32:15–35.

15 Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant law in
his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back. 16 The tablets were the work
of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

17 When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, “There is the sound of war in the camp.”

18 Moses replied:

“It is not the sound of victory,

it is not the sound of defeat;

it is the sound of singing that I hear.”

19 When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. 20 And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

21 He said to Aaron, “What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?”

22 “Do not be angry, my lord,” Aaron answered. “You know how prone these people are to evil. 23 They said to me, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.’ 24 So I told them, ‘Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.’ Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!”

25 Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies. 26 So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me.” And all the Levites rallied to him.

27 Then he said to them, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.’” 28 The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. 29 Then Moses said, “You have been set apart to the Lord today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day.”

30 The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”

31 So Moses went back to the Lord and said, “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. 32 But now, please forgive their sin —but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.”

33 The Lord replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.

34 Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin."

35 And the Lord struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

And this is the cyclical story that continues to repeat and repeat and repeat all through the next 40 years as the Hebrews wander the desert wilderness of the Sinai. And it is not until the entire generation dies off that they are allowed to enter the Land of Promise.

I have often wondered how a Semitic slave people, whom we have learned through our various synagogue and church teachings were a people of God, could so soon and so quickly turn to idol worship after having experienced such wondrous acts of their God. They saw the devastation that the Plagues took on the Egyptians—yet not on them. They slathered and swiped their doorposts and lintels with sheep's blood to stave off the Plague against the first born, and they saw miraculous deliverance. They found themselves trapped up against the waters of the sea, with Pharaoh's armies closing down on them, yet were once again delivered by the miraculous hand of the Divine who sent a cloudy pillar of fog and fire, and the opened the waters of the sea so they could cross on dry ground. They experienced the wonders of their God, right before their very eyes! And yet, just a few short weeks later, while Moses was at the top of the mountain, they needed a physical representation of that God, saying, "We don't know what's happened to this man, Moses, who led us out of Egypt. Where did he go?" And Aaron, Moses' brother, told them to turn over all the gold they had plundered from the Egyptians and he cast a Golden Calf, and sculpted it with engravers' tools. The people all responded, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from Egypt!"

How could they so readily abandon this god of Moses? The answer is that, perhaps, they didn't. They were simply a product of their environment. They were not a people of Jehovah, they were the descendants of a Canaanite family that had, throughout the past 400 years, been thoroughly assimilated into Egyptian culture. Even as slaves, they were completely "Egyptianized." And the building of the Golden Calf is simply a clue as to who these people really were, and how Egyptian they had become as a people group.

Perhaps Moses/Senenmut was a man bent on nation-building. He had fled Egypt 40 years earlier, the facts of which are lost in antiquity, save for the

account in the biblical passages—and we already know how those texts can lose historical reliability in light of their editing and faith-based presentation. Again, this is not to say that the biblical passages are false or manufactured, but they have obviously shown us that a keen eye to the historical details was deemed as unnecessary to their overall theme of bolstering the faithful and building a history for the nation of Israel. Perhaps Moses did indeed murder an Egyptian taskmaster, precipitating his flight from the "wrath of the Pharaoh" who sought to take his life. But as mentioned earlier, there is probably much more to this scenario than the biblical account mentions. Senenmut, Royal Architect under Pharaoh Hatshepsut, most certainly had continual contact with the builders, workers, overseers, and task masters associated with his projects. Was there some devastatingly heinous encounter he had with one of the overseers? Was this something that launched a political move from Thutmoses III? Could this be the source of Senenmut's disappearance from Egyptian history?

And only after 40 years hiding in the Sinatic wilderness, did Senenmut return, when his old rival, Thutmoses III, had died and left his son, Amenhotep II on the throne? And perhaps this very act of Senenmut's return and the Great Exodus was the very sparking point of Amehotep's ragefull eradication of not only Hatshepsut, but her Grand Vizier, Hereditary Crown Prince Senenmut, from the walls of Egypt's temples and monuments.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Wilderness

THE HAPU THREAD

Hapu was more than capable of leading an expedition into the wilderness, and his wealth of knowledge would have been an inspiration to many, not to mention his spiritual understanding and great literary familiarity with sacred texts, which have associations with biblical scripture. Could he have split the Red Sea to allow the fleeing migrants to escape capture by Pharaoh's armies? I think not, but I can see him presenting an alternative route across the upper northeastern trade route, which leads to the peninsular of the Sinai wilderness, or taking one of the numerous moored boats that made up the fleet of ships that ferried the mined ore. Would he have been able to draw water from the living rock? There are many examples where fresh water supplies have been located in or behind solid rock, a geological phenomenon that is not that rare in Egypt.

Taking the well-trodden eastern trade route as their exit out of the Thebaid, they would have met with little resistance from the military outposts, not only due to Hapu's high-ranking position, but also because the army patrols would have been recalled back to Thebes to restore some kind of order and stability in a city that had become lawless and desolate. Their departure out of the Theban city would have met with some local resistance given their sheer size and amount of provisions they would have had to have been carrying with them. Though it is plausible to suggest that their numbers would have swelled, as those who looked upon them had second thoughts and chose to join their ranks, as it presented a better alternative to dying in the city of the dead.

Passage to the Wilderness

The eastern trade routes were already well established during the 18th dynasty, partially because of Hapu's countless quarrying expeditions to places to like Wadi Hammamat and the Sinai Peninsula, having ample watering holes en-route, and numerous places offering shelter and food. The journey would have been rather comfortable, given the apparatus already existing along its well-trodden paths. Of course this does somewhat depend upon the number of individuals that accompanied Hapu on the Exodus; biblical text refers to tens of thousands that left Egypt, and all in one day upon Pharaoh's command to leave, but with the population of Thebes at the time, and the devastation that the flood would have incurred upon that number, I would suggest that a few thousand undertook the journey. If one was to add up the number of supposed Hebrew slaves, their wives, children, parents, grandparents, friends, relatives, livestock, and the plundered bounty, one can only imagine that the beginning of the great trail of now-freed slaves would have reached the Red Sea coast while the end of the trail was only just leaving Thebes. Almost totaling one million in number, I can only imagine the hygienic nightmare this would have proposed. The logistics are completely mind-blowing, and I suppose this is where faith comes into play, allowing one to believe the extraordinary numbers and logistics to facilitate such an Exodus.

While in the wilderness, those that sought only peace and answers to that which they had experienced in Thebes managed a meager existence, with the head of their party proclaiming a spiritual leadership over them. There are many examples of biblical narrative from the Old Testament that bear significant resemblance to ancient texts and writings of the ancient Egyptians. Papyrus that has made its way down through the millennia speaks of covenants and rules by which to live one's life. This writing is similar to the words that Moses received from God on the mountain of Sinai as retold in Exodus 20:2–17:

> And God spoke all these words, saying:
>
> "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."
>
> "You shall have no other Gods before Me."
>
> "You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in

heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me,

But showing mercy to thousands to those who love me and keep My commandments."

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord your God will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it Holy.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God has given you.

"You shall not murder.

"You shall not commit adultery.

"You shall not steal.

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

"You shall not covet your neigbour's house; you shall not covet your neigbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his Ox, nor his Donkey, nor anything that is your neigbours."

An interesting addition to the biblical narrative, "The Law of the Altar" in Exodus 20:23–24, follows the verses that I have just shown.

"You shall not make anything to be with Me-Gods of silver or gold you shall not make for yourselves.

"An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you."

The reason I have mentioned this particular section of Exodus is to point out that during the time period that the 72 Hebraic scholars were in

Alexandria, under the invitation of Ptolemy II and Queen Arsinoe, the Arsinoeia Festival most probably took place. It was a decree that during the processional march, altars of earth were to be used instead of stone altars to receive the offerings and sacrifices.[1] This small but important point may indicate that the Hebraic scholars did indeed take contemporary information and material and placed it within the narrative, even though it was out of context, and surely would not have taken place during the time period in which Exodus was implied. These earthen altars are but one example of this type of insertion to suit the agenda of the Hebrew narrative.

Ptolemaic period horned altar at Karnak Temple complex in Luxor, Egypt.

Spell #125

The Book of the Dead is a compilation of various spells and incantations that have been handed down throughout the past few millennia. Some derive from the later periods in Egyptian history, whereas others have their origins in the pyramid texts of the old kingdom. I would like to draw your attention to Spell 125. There are a few versions depending on the period and its translation, but here is one example, which clearly shows comparisons between the Old Testament narrative and those of ancient Egyptian:

1. O far strider who came forth from Heliopolis, I have not sinned.
2. O flame embracer who came forth from Kheraha, I have not robbed.

3. O beaked One who came forth from Hermopolis, I have not been greedy.
4. O swallower of shadows who came forth from the cavern, I have not stolen.
5. O fierce of face who came forth from Rosetau, I have not killed people.
6. O Ruty Who Came Forth from the Sky, I have not debased measures.
7. O flinty eyed one who came forth from Letopolis, I have not done crooked things.
8. O flaming one who came forth backward, I have not stolen the Gods property.
9. O bone breaker who came forth from Heracleopolis, I have not killed people.
10. O prosperer of the flame who came forth from Memphis, I have not taken away food.
11. O cavern dweller who came forth from the west, I have not been ill tempered.
12. O white toothed one who came forth from the Fayyum, I have not transgressed.
13. O blood eater who came forth from the slaughtering block, I have not killed divine cattle.
14. O eater of entrails who came from forth from the court of the 30, I have not profiteered.
15. O lord of truth who came forth from the Two Truths, I have not robbed bread rations.
16. O strayer who came forth from Bubastis, I have not eavesdropped.
17. O pale one who came forth from Heliopolis, I have not been garrulous.
18. O doubly evil viper who came forth from Busiris, I have not quarreled except in behalf of property.
19. O w3mmty snake who came forth from the place of execution, I have not committed adultery.
20. O seer of what he carried of who came forth from the house of Min, I have not been unchaste.
21. O thou who art over the First born who came forth from Kum el Hisn, I have not inspired terror.
22. O attacker who came forth from Xois, I have not transgressed.
23. O troublemaker who came forth from wry (t), I have not been hot tempered.
24. O child who came forth from the Heliopolitan nome, I have not been deaf to words of truth.
25. O proclaimer of speech who came forth from W nsy, I have not made trouble.
26. O Bubastite who came forth from the crypt, I have not winked at injustice.
27. O backward facer who came forth from the tomb pit, I have not done wrong sexually, I have not practiced homosexuality.
28. O hot foot who came forth from the twilight, I have not dissembled.
29. O dark one who came forth from darkness, I have not quarreled.
30. O bringer of his offering who came from Sais, I have not done violence.
31. O Lord of persons who came forth from Ndft, I have not been quick tempered.
32. O counselor who came forth from Wenet, I have not misrepresented my nature, I have not washed the God.
33. O horned one who came forth from Asyut, I have not gossiped about matters.
34. O Nefertem who came forth from Memphis, I have done no wrong, I have done no evil.
35. O thou who lets none survive who came forth from Busiris, I have not reviled the King.

36. O thou who acts as he will who came forth from Antaeopolis, I have not waded in the water.
37. O Ihy who came forth from the deep, I have not been loud voiced.
38. O prosperer of the common folk who came forth from his dwelling, I have not reviled God.
39. O uniter of good things who came forth from the Harpoon nome, I have not been puffed up.
40. O uniter of attributes who came forth from the city, I have not made distinctions of others from myself.
41. O head up who came forth from the pit, not large have been my needs except of my own property.
42. O carrier off of his portion who came forth from the silent land, I have not reviled the God in my city.

The Holy Mountain and Hathor

Serabit el Khadim, the temple or sanctuary of Hathor and Ptah, sits on the western mountain range of the Sinai. It was here that each consecutive mining expedition sent out by their respective pharaoh would erect a stele in commemoration to their miraculous feats of engineering and quarrying. Each room within the Temple complex held an array of steles, each one having been carved in hieroglyphs, paying homage to their Pharaoh. At the far end two caves stood side by side, one being dedicated to the God Ptah, the patron saint of the craftsman and healing, while the other was dedicated to the Goddess Hathor, where a natural spring gave forth the life giving force of water in such an inhospitable place. Located among the undulating hills on the plateau of Serabit el Khadim are various workshops where one can find discarded and unused steles or tablets that had not yet been completed or received their engraved words of homage and patronage.

Could this possibly be the mountain where Moses received the word of God upon the two tablets that became known as the 10 Commandments? Could it be that Serabit el Khadim and its association with Hathor have any relation or association with the Golden Calf that was crafted from the smelted gold of the Hebrews by Moses' brother Aaron? We can look to Exodus 32:2–35 for clues.

> Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come make us Gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."
>
> And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives,

your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."

So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron.

And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This is your God, O Israel that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord."

Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

And the Lord said to Moses, "Go get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.

"They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'this is you God, O Israel that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'"

The goddess Hathor from the walls of Hatshepsut's Temple of Djeser Djeseru at Deir el Bahri in Luxor, Egypt.

And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff necked people!

"Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: "Lord why does your wrath burn hot

against your people who you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power ad with a mighty hand?

“Why should the Egyptians speak ad say, ‘he brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth’ Turn your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to your people.

“Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’”

So the Lord relented from the harm which he said he would do to His people.

And Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand. The tablets were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other they were written.

Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets.

And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “there is a noise of war in the camp.”

But he said:

“It is not the voice of those who shout in victory,

Now is it the voice of those who cry out in defeat,

But the voice of those who sing that I hear.”

So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf ad the dancing. So Moses’ anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.

Then he took the calf which they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and the made the Children of Israel drink it.

And Moses said to Aaron, “what did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?”

So Aaron said, “Do not let the anger of my Lord become hot. You know the people that they are set on evil.

“For they said to me, ‘make us Gods that shall go before us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’

“And I said to them, ‘whoever has any gold, let them break it off,’ so they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire and this calf came out.”

Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to their shame among their enemies),

Then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, “Whoever is on the Lord’s side, let him come to me.” And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.

And he said to them, ‘thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, everyman his companion, and every man his neighbor.’”

So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

Then Moses said, “Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, that he may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother.”

And it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, “You have sinned a great sin. So now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”

Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Oh, these people have sinned a great sin, and have made for themselves a God of gold!

“Yet now, if you will forgive their sin-but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which you have written.”

And the Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book.

“Now therefore, go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. Behold My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin.”

So the Lord plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made.

Remember: We are dealing with faith-based biblical narrative, because historical and archaeological material does provide us with some interesting facts that could be evidence that this was the location in which Moses did indeed receive the word of the Lord God. What we have not yet discovered on the mountains of the Sinai are the graves of the 3,000 who lost their lives due to the transgression. It was such bloodshed for a religion that is supposed to be of peace and love, so I find this particular section difficult to comprehend the willingness of their participation in mass murder.

But what if Hapu had led his assemblage to Serabit el Khadim via the route that hugged the eastern shores of the Red Sea, and in doing so provided his group with ample food and water supplies that ran down from the mountains of the Sinai into the sea below? This route would have been well trodden and again provided watering wells and shelter along its route. Having traversed many if not all the ancient trade routes in the western deserts of

Egypt, I'm more than familiar with the abundance of infrastructure that was created to facilitate the transportation of rare commodities and trade from Egypt's neighbors. These routes were so well established that they were probably more akin to our motorway systems given the amount of heavy traffic that rode along their dusty paths. It would not have been such a lonely place as we might imagine.

For me, this is where the theory becomes exciting: Hapu, the great architect and quarryman, would have had previous knowledge of Serabit el Khadim. In fact, it is most likely that he had visited the site early in his career, and may have had some kind of spiritual enlightenment while there, similar to that of Moses with his experience with the burning bush. If Hapu led his group (number 4) to Serabit el Khadim, allowing them time to re-gather their strength and reserves from the ample water supplies, and possibly limited vegetation that grew within the secreted valleys, Hapu may have journeyed to the top of the mountain where the ancient site of Serabit el Khadim is located. Here he would be able to contemplate his next move, considering all the aspects and pitfalls that may lie ahead of him. If we consider the plausible request that the royal children were indeed sent with him, then their safety and well-being would have been paramount and foremost importance in the mind of Hapu, with regard for the safety of the remaining group members coming a very close second.

Within the site of Serabit el Khadim there is a King-list, similar to that of the temple complex of Abydos. He would have been able to wander the pillared halls of the complex, reading the names aloud to himself, reminiscing about those that he had indeed served during his long and fruitful life. Their characteristics and mannerisms flowing like milk and honey through his mind, retrieving lost memories of past glories and moments lost. The chamber that held the steles commemorating his beloved Horus, the Pharaoh Amenhotep III, would have possibly given him strength and inner guidance about his next move. Surrounded by those whom he had loved, cared for, and served would possibly serve him now as inspiration.

We must also consider the condition and mindset of the participants of the Exodus, and how they were dealing with the trauma of not only the crisis back home, but also the upheaval that they were experiencing. Would they be motivated? Were they lacking inspiration and spiritual guidance being so far from home? Would they be accepting of Hapu and his plan? Had their initial approval of the Exodus arrangement wavered in the desperate heat of the

desert?

I’m sure these worries concerned Moses as they did Hapu. The mistrust that had grown in the absence of Moses while he climbed the mountain to converse with God had manifested into a return to their native gods.

John Ward standing in front of a sarcophagus in the vaulted underground complex of the Apis Bull, the Serappeum. The small niches in the wall were for the insertion of prayers, spells, and dedications.

Let’s backtrack a moment and look at the Crown Prince Thutmoses. There is archaeological evidence from the tomb of Saqqara where a small sarcophagus dedicated to the cat of the Crown Prince was interned. The inscriptions upon the casket inform us that the Crown Prince was a Sem-priest, working and performing rituals and ceremonies relating to the Apis Bull and their internment within the Serappeum, which is located a short distance from the step pyramid of Pharaoh Djoser—the one that Imhotep built and who was subsequently deified by the Ptolemies together with Hapu. It is also worth speculating here that during the time the Crown Prince spent learning his craft with the other incumbent Sem-priests, Hapu may have been

in Memphis at the same time, having originated from that area and having spent his childhood there learning his craft, too.

Temple of Bull

When Scotty was here in Egypt, we had the privilege of visiting the ancient Serappeum at Saqqara. While there, I shared with Scotty the sheer exhilaration I was experiencing as I entered the vast vaulted labyrinth. I shared with Scotty an imagined vision of the Crown Prince acting as an incumbent Sem-priest surrounded by his peers and High Priest, recanting hymns and prayers that were only uttered within the sacredness of this holy sanctuary. Hapu attended dressed appropriately in his white flowing robes and holding his staff of office, while standing next to the living Horus, Pharaoh Amenhotep III, the father of the Sem-priest who eagerly wished to impress his father with his knowledge and respect. It was quite a moving image to say the least; one that will remain with me throughout my travels and adventures here in Egypt.

John Ward and a stele bearing the image of Amenhotep III atop Serabit el Khadim, Sinai.

So, the Crown Prince was indeed a Sem-priest of the Apis Bull, which was also the same Apis Bull from which Hapu's father had received his epithet. Coincidence? We have not only the Hathoric Cow Goddess, but also a Sem-priest of the Apis Bull all in one area at the foot of Serabit el Khadim where the Hathoric cave of life giving force was located. It is not impossible that the Crown Prince, alias Aaron, designed a Golden Calf at the bequest of his fellow subjects, as they turned to him for guidance and support in the absence of Hapu? He may have fashioned from the gold or other precious metals that they had taken with them from Thebes, or they may have mined for them or exchanged goods and other wares with the local miners. In any case, a Golden Calf was born and worshipped. So can we suggest that the Hebraic scholars took this material and then transformed it, added their own version of events that suited their own dogmatic viewpoint, adhering to the newly formed Judaic religion and all its conformities for which they had received their invitation to transcribe its history?

While wandering the halls of Serabit el Khadim, Hapu may have considered the spiritual welfare of his party and, in doing so, transcribed for them a set of rules and regulations to guide, help, and nurture them during their journey. I refer to Spell 125, which I compared to the Old Testament version of the Ten Commandments previously. Imagine Hapu sitting cross-legged with his long dress tucked under his feet upon the dusty floor. Strewn around him were the remnants of carving a set of sandstone tablets; he was smoothing their surface with a broken shard of pottery, removing any and all impurities from their flat face. Then he took his ceremonial dagger that was presented to him as gift from his Pharaoh, and he began inscribing upon the silky surface the sacred hieroglyphs and magical incantations that he had learned as a boy back in Memphis.

If I may draw a comparison between the biblical text that refers to the conversation between God and Moses regarding his brother Aaron, and the subsequent arrival of said brother, could it be possible that Hapu considered using the Crown Prince as his voice, seeking to elevate the Crown Prince's standing in the small but tight community? After all, he was the rightful heir to the kingdom of Egypt, the older son of the Pharaoh. In Exodus 4:14–17 we see that conversation take place:

> So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and He said, "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.

> “Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do,
>
> “So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God.
>
> “And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs.”

I do not suggest that Hapu was out to become a martyr or a prophet. I suggest he did what he thought was best for the integrity of his group and their well-being. If anything, his intentions were more than honorable. Relying on years of wisdom that he wished to impart upon his flock, having no children of his own and no wife to embrace him, he possibly took his mass of fellow travelers as his own children and wished only to care for them as his own. I would think that Hapu led a lonely life, always busy serving others while receiving praise and accolades for his service. But when he returned home, his bed was empty of love, and his corridors lay silent from the cries of children playing in the midday sun. His inner ornamental courtyard was bereft of young maidens frolicking among the lotuses and lilies, whispering about stolen glances of young men. He had no son with whom to share his vast knowledge nor with whom to show his battle scars or recanting stories of old Pharaohs in the dim light of a camp fire. I’m sure there are those of us who can empathize with him. Moses was the exact opposite in his early, formative years having been brought up in the palace of the Pharaoh as one who was served not serving. His childhood would have been one of joy and learning the art of war. As he grew older, his life became strikingly similar to that of Hapu. His footsteps in the sand would have been great and mighty compared to those who walked in his shadow. When he ran from Egypt he married and had children, though he could not share his burdens with them. Instead, he led a lonely life in the desert wilderness. Returning to Egypt, he left behind the family that Hapu never had, sacrificing his personal happiness for the greater good of his people. Upon his return to the deserts, he treated his fellow travelers as his own children, caring and loving them without regard for his own safety and needs.

Fallen stele atop Serabit el Khadim, Sinai.

However when they left the safety of Serabit el Khadim is unknown, but a stele was erected at Serabit el Khadim in honor of the living God, Pharaoh Amenhotep III, by Sobekhotep, the Treasury Overseer Son of Sobekmose in the 36th regal year of 1356 BC. This year happens to fall within the period I suggest the flood takes place; it may be that the stele had already been erected before their arrival, or indeed they may well have been working there extracting turquoise upon the arrival of group 4. It does not provide us with a certain date of departure, so the small community might have stayed within the vicinity for some period of time, spreading its claim on the land further and further as they searched and foraged for suitable supplies, becoming semi-nomadic in the process.

The rest of the story I leave to faith. It was never my intention to pick apart or replace the entire biblical story of Exodus; I merely wanted to present a series of events that may have acted as a catalyst for the main event to take place. I also wanted to show that there were indeed historical figures that truly lived and walked among the living that could have provided an inspiration for the characterization of Moses.

Did Hapu lead them into the wilderness? We will never know, and we will never know if Moses did, either. I would like to think he did lead a group of survivors headed by the royal children and mentored by Hapu in the

process. We have to rely on our own belief and faith systems to uphold our own virtues, similar to that of Hapu inscribing upon the stone tablets a set of rules, so that one would be accepted into the house of the gods, or god. It matters not. We have only a brief moment on this planet, and how we live it and how we treat others is not written; it dwells within our hearts.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Ark of the Covenant: The Ancient Barque Shrine

THE HAPU THREAD

The Ark of the Testimony, Exodus 25:10–22

"And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and cubit and a half its height.

"And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around.

"You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in its four corners; two rings shall be on one side, and two rings on the other side.

"And you shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold.

"You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them.

"The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it.

"And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you.

"You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width.

"And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat.

"Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat.

> "And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat.
>
> "You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you.
>
> "And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, of all things which I will give you in commandment to the Children of Israel."

I opened this chapter with the Old Testament quote from Exodus 25:10–22 regarding the Ark of the Covenant that God requested of Moses and the Children of Israel together with all the articles of the tabernacle. This also included the table for the showbread, the gold lamp stand, the altar of burnt offering, the altar of incense, the anointing oil and incense, the bronze laver, the court of the tabernacle, the garments of the priesthood, the ephod, the breastplate, and other priestly garments. I include such a detailed list because the items are important to the overall understanding of this chapter.

When Moses left Egypt with the freed Hebrew slaves, they plundered the Egyptians. This bounty was mentioned again when the Egyptian army was crossing the Red Sea to recapture the Hebrew slaves and their bounty. However, the merciful God had other plans and crushed them beneath the heavy waters of the sea, drowning them and sending their bodies to a watery grave. Were they Hebrews when they left Egypt? I suggest that they were not Hebrew by any stretch of the imagination, but were most definitely Egyptian. How a man that was born and brought up in a country in which his ancestors were also born and raised 400 years prior can hail himself from a different nation is absurd. By all means assign a heritage or a hereditary culture, but we arrive at the same question I asked earlier, and that is: Where is the evidence to support the biblical scripture and the identity of the Hebrews? I continue to search but return empty handed.

A depiction of the Ark of the Covenant in bas-relief.

However, if we take a different route and tackle this from a different perspective, one that respects the heritage and culture but also recognizes the culture and homeland from which they have been raised, I would propose that the people Moses freed from captivity were indeed Egyptians. We can indeed find evidence in Exodus for this as we continue to read through the various verses.

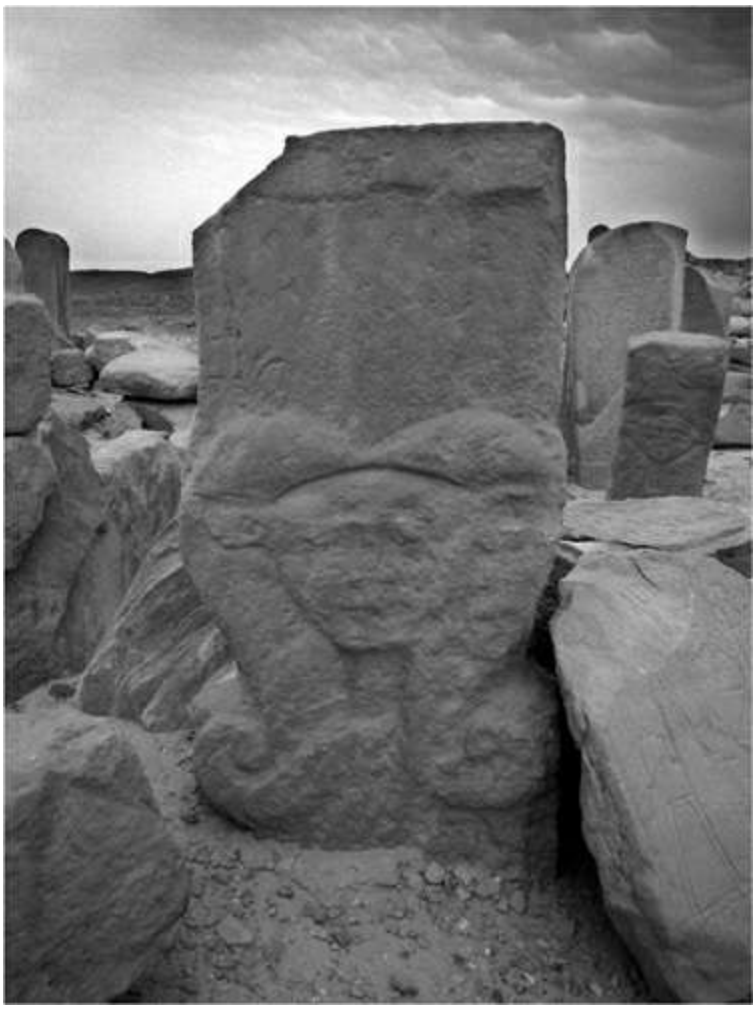
The first verse that I would like to bring to your attention is “The Song of Miriam,” in which the sister of Moses and Aaron takes a timbrel in her hand and begins to play a tune together with the women of Israel and associated dances begin to celebrate their miraculous escape out of the clutches of the pharaoh, and his chariots by the hand of God.

> Sing to the Lord,
> For He has triumphed gloriously!
> The horse and its rider
> He has thrown into the sea!

I can accept the celebration and its associated festivities at surviving such an ordeal, but I draw a comparison with that of the Hathoric priestesses and their musical dances and exotic movements. The timbrel is also the musical instrument that the God Bes is playing while dancing in the pictorial relief, represented on the side of the gilded chairs that adorned the tomb of the Princess Sitamun's grandparents. As I have suggested already, I propose that the character of Miriam is based upon Princess Sitamun and her associations with the Hathoric cult, along with Hapu's mother. It was extremely popular during the 18th Dynasty for the women of the household in the upper classes to be connected with the cult of Hathor. It would also be sensible to suggest that the Egyptians that had fled Egypt with Moses would have had exposure to the Hathoric cult in one way or another regardless of their class location. So, covering all sides of the arguments, it is obvious that the Egyptian women that came out to celebrate their victory performed a semi-ritualistic dance based upon Hathoric themes.

Raiders of the Lost Barque

The Ark of the Covenant is probably one of the most misunderstood items that the Hebrews created during their time in the wilderness. Adorning the walls of the Egyptian temples, the Barque Shrine stands out from most of them. It is a rectangular box that has certain characteristic adornments attached to it as decoration, having poles that are connected to the four corners to facilitate carrying upon the shoulders of the priests. It usually rests upon another rectangular box that elevates it off the ground, with tables and stands by its sides, which hold various libational jugs and other liquid holding vessels. Offering plates, lamps, and fans usually stand by its side. All of these are contained within a tabernacle, held by ornate poles to the corners with a decorative freeze adorning the top trim.



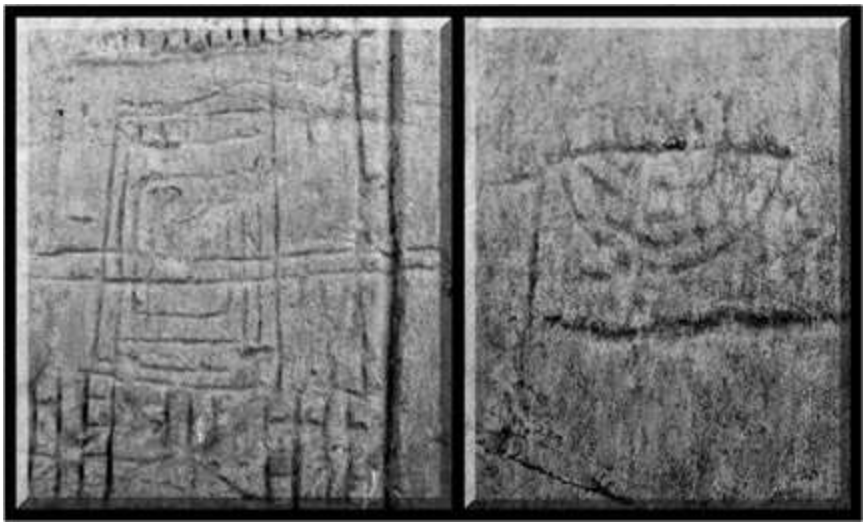
In the Sinai wilderness, high atop the remote mountain of Serabit el Khadim, stands the Sanctuary Temple of Hathor. This is one of her many depictions at the ancient site.

Do any of the items have any resemblance to the passage that I wrote at the beginning of this chapter or the remaining articles of the tabernacle that were requested of Moses by God?

Egyptian Barque Shrine from the walls of Luxor Temple depicting the Opet Festival. Does it look familiar?

It is clear that the Ark of the Covenant is indeed an Egyptian Barque Shrine that has its roots within the confines of the sacred temples of Egypt. Returning to the question of whether the Hebrew slaves were indeed Hebrew or Egyptian, the Barque Shrine is the best example of this argument. The craftsmen were instructed to build the Ark utilizing their own knowledge that they had learned while in Egypt, which led to the Barque shrine complete with the two protective goddesses that usually adorn the opposing sides of any sarcophagus: Isis and Nephthys, the sisters of Osiris. Now the important question has to be whether Moses actually ever commissioned the Ark and whether it was an addition by the Judaic scholars in Alexandria? Another question to raise is: What language were the tablets written in that held the Ten Commandments? Was it Hieratic, Hieroglyphic, or some other kind of cursive text? The Egyptian Barque Shrine was used during most celebrations; it carried within it the idol of the respective temple it originated from. These representations of the living gods could then visit one another by being carried on the shoulders of the incumbent priests. One of the best and most beautiful depictions of this kind of festivity is the Opet festival that took place between Karnak and Luxor. The Theban triad was carried aloft along the spectacular Sphinx-lined avenue on the shoulders of the white-robed

priests, freshly shaven and having their leopard skins draped over their chests, wearing their turned-up sandals. The Barque Shrine would have the illusion of gliding through the air. This was preceded by an array of dignitaries and other high officials all dressed and looking rather pompous as they strode ahead of the divine Barque.



Two bits of ancient graffiti depicting Egyptian Barque Shrines from the walls of southern Karnak temple. Could either of these possibly be the Ark of the Covenant?

The incised relief upon the walls of the enclosed colonnade at Luxor Temple depicts the procession in wonderful detail, complete with the facial expressions of the priests as they proudly hold aloft their beloved God on their humble shoulders. But it is the Barque Shrine that is important here; they contain within them the living personification of the God in statuette form, the words of God, the forms of God, the dress of God. The ark is merely another representation of the Egyptian Barque Shrine and not a new invention of the Judaic religion. It held the words of God written on Egyptian stelae or tablets, probably made from sandstone.

Similar to the famous crowns of the Egyptian pharaohs, not one Barque Shrine has yet to be discovered; given the number of temples and shrines it is hard to comprehend that not one has survived the tests of time. Yet when we begin to understand the significance of them, one can then begin to appreciate why none have survived. However, many scholars and independent researchers have claimed to have discovered one or another hidden in sacred unapproachable sanctuaries, in Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, or even in Glastonbury, England!

Did the freed Hebrew slaves carry before them the power of God held within a box of acacia wood gilded in gold? Again this falls directly within the faith camp. I have discussed the Barque Shrine as a means of transporting the living Gods incarnate within statues and not some mystical energy source that emitted some kind of radiation that consumed those who touched it. The Old Testament can be seen by many as a collection of horrific stories that tell of mass genocide, murder, rape, adultery, and other horrifying acts of human insanity. For me, it is purely a controlling aspect of the indoctrination that goes hand-in-hand with the religion. But for sure, we will never uncover the real truth of what took place in the wilderness, or if it took place at all as we have been led to believe.

I can easily imagine Hapu at Serabit el Khadim with his hand-held steles adorned with the hieratic scripts of Spell 125, having climbed down the mountain and approached the Crown Prince, and in gesture of benevolence he placed the steles in the living Horus's hands, empowering him in front of the watchful crowd. There is a certain serenity in writing about Hapu; he seems to bring out the good in me. I see the predicaments and problems in a different way. I do not see the murder and destruction that I have had to read through and pour over within the Old Testament. With Hapu I have had to imagine the pure anguish by those who experienced the destruction of Thebes. The death and chaos that ensued in the aftermath, the correlation to the plagues, the rise and subsequent destruction of the old guard as Atenists took to the streets desecrating and eradicating the name and words of Amun-Ra. It has been a struggle at times to remain neutral and maintain a level ground on which to base my theories. I encourage you to question and research. Look for the truths hidden behind metaphors and dogma. For sure we will never uncover all the truths, but we can start. As I have said before, it was never my intention to replace Moses as a historical and religious icon; I merely wanted to show that there are other plausible scenarios that should be explored and investigated. It is certain that Hapu knew he had served and he had observed, but more importantly he did not dictate.

Conclusion

The authors, John Ward and Scotty Roberts, at Karnak Temple in Luxor, Egypt.

We end with a short myth pertaining to Hapu that was said to Manetho, the Greek educated Egyptian. The story tells of how Pharaoh Amenhotep III approached Hapu about how he could converse with the gods face to face as his ancestors had. Hapu went away to ponder and discuss the various options (no doubt with the gods themselves). It is said that he wrote a letter to the Pharaoh stating that, if he cleared the unclean—the shepherds and the lepers from the land of Egypt—then he would be able to converse with the gods face to face. Upon receiving Hapu's letter, Pharaoh removed all the shepherds and lepers to the quarries of Egypt. But he was unsuccessful in his desire to converse face-to-face with the gods. There was a second part to the letter that Hapu did not send with the original that pertained to the consequences of such actions, saying that the expelled victims of Pharaoh's obsession to communicate with the gods, who totaled 80,000 plus, would align themselves with the enemies of Egypt, and eventually invade and subdue Egypt for a total of 15 years. Unable to bear the guilt of not sending the second part through fear of upsetting his beloved Pharaoh, Hapu committed suicide. Josephus the Hebraic historian dismissed this story as

pure myth and its plausible connection with the Hebrew Exodus.

If you thirst for knowledge, if you want to know the answers, if you are tired of relying simply on what you have been told, then go to the headwaters, dip your face in the pool, and drink deep. The answers are there; you simply have to go there and look for them. You may not always find the answers you want, and you will have challenges before, during, and after. But continue to ask, seek, and dig for the facts that may lead you to the truth of a matter.

As for Moses, you have been presented two equally illustrative pictures of who we think the man might have been. We are not satisfied simply casting him off as a cultural legend that has been turned to a religious myth. We know the man exists, and yet we have drawn different conclusions based on our different paths and directions of study.

But which one of us is right? Make no mistake; it truly doesn't matter, even though we have threatened to settle the argument between us with an arm-wrestling contest. We seek because we want to know, and why would we want to know something that is inherently wrong? So, yes, there is not only time, but heart, tears, intellect, and relentless digging to try to find the answers. We sometimes even hope there's some truth to be stumbled upon along the way.

Was Moses a man named Senenmut who was found by the Daughter of the Pharaoh? Was he a High Priest who served his Lord and Master and answered the call of the gods—or the god? Were the Hebrews a downtrodden people held in bondage, or were they an integrated people trying to find their moorings in an ancient world?

If you dig long enough and deep enough you will eventually find what you are looking for. It may not be the entire picture, but due to the never-ending search, you make it fit the scenario. Exodus is such a scenario; it has captivated and intrigued thousands of scholars for more than 2,000 years, and we're pretty confident that it will continue to do so for a long time yet.

APPENDIX A

The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage

{...} is used where there is missing text or the damage to the papyrus has prevented a translation.

Line 1 ..... (*Missing verse*)
The door keepers say, “We shall go and pillage!”
And the makers of sweets {...}
..... (*Missing verse*)
The laundryman refuses to take up his load, And the sailors (?) {...}
..... (*Missing verse*)
The catchers of birds have marshaled their fighting forces.
..... (*Missing verse*)

Line 10 The men of the Delta marshes bear shields,
And the brewers of beer {...}
Verily, every face goes white with fear
..... (*Missing verse*)
Verily, every man is distressed, for a man sees his son as his foe,
And rancor is everywhere
Verily, every face goes white with fear
..... (*Missing verse*)
And one man incites another: “Come, take control of the mob.”
Verily {...}

Line 20 ..... (*Missing verse*)
Verily, every face goes white with fear,

For now is fulfilled what was fated for us
In the time of Horus, in the age of the Ennead,
Verily {...}
And foreigners have overrun the whole of Egypt
Verily, every face goes white with fear,
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
Verily {...}

Line 30 For what men of old foretold has come to fulfillment.
Verily, every face goes white with fear
..... (*Missing verse*)
Verily, there are none who can escape {...}
..... (*Missing verse*)
Verily, every face goes white with fear,
For citizen's bow. Their heads to the earth, subject to marauding bands,
And a man goes to plough bearing his shield.
Verily, the common man says:
"My heart is in agony because of the condition of the land,"

Line 40 But one who is sly can become wealthy.
Verily, every face goes white with fear,
For archers are arrayed in order, evil is everywhere,
And men are not what they used to be.
Verily, thieves plunder everywhere,
And the servant pilfers whatever he finds.
Verily, the Nile overflows, but no one tills the earth on account of it,
And all men say, "We know not what will happen throughout the land."
Verily, the women are barren, and none conceive,
Khnum does not shape men because of the condition of the land.

Line 50 Verily, paupers have become men of affluence,
And he who could not provide sandals for himself is now the possessor of

wealth
Verily, faithful servants, their hearts have become surly,
And the magistrates do not satisfy their people when they cry out.
Verily, the heart is horrified,
For affliction pervades the land,
Blood is everywhere,
There is no end of death,
And the death-shroud summons,
Though one's time has not yet come.

Verily, countless corpses are entombed in the river;
The waters are a tomb, and the place of embalming is the river.
Verily, the Nobles are in lamentation, while the paupers are in glee,
And every city says, "Let us drive out the mighty from our midst."
Verily, the people are like Ibises, for filth pervades the land,
And there are none at all in our time whose garments are white.
Verily, the land whirls like the movement of a potter's wheel,
The thief is a possessor of wealth, and he who was wealth is a robber.
Verily, the road to the tomb lies open;
Even the cattle are driven off, and the peasant says:

"How appalling! What shall I do?"
Verily, the river is blood, but one drinks from it;
One may turn away from people, yet one will thirst for water.
Verily, the portals, columns, and walls have been burned,
But the halls of the palace Life, Prosperity and Health are established and strong.
Verily, the ship of the southerners is shattered,
The cities are ravaged, and Upper Egypt has become a desolate plateau.
Verily, the crocodiles belch from the fish they have seized,
As men go freely to them,
For this is the utter destruction of the land.

Line 80 Verily, men say, “Do not tread here, for behold, it is a net,”
But behold, men fall into the trap like fish,
For, in his dismay, the terror-stricken does not notice it.
Verily, the people are diminished in number,
And he who buries his brother in the earth is everywhere;
A wise man speaks, but then he flees without delay.
Verily, the son of one whose name is known lacks recognition,
And the child of his wife becomes the son of his maidservant.
Verily, the desert pervades the land,
The nomes are annihilated, and foreign allies have come to Egypt.

Line 90 Verily, Asiatics have arrived in the land,
And in truth there are no Egyptians anywhere.
Verily, gold, lapis lazuli, silver, turquoise, carnelian, amethysts,
Emeralds and all precious stones adorn the necks of maidservants,
Noble looking ladies are throughout the whole land,
But the housewives sigh, “If only we had something to eat!”
Verily, Life is abhorrent to the hearts of the Noble women,
For their bodies are wretched because of their ragged clothes,
And their hearts languish when they give one another greeting.
Verily, ebony caskets are destroyed,

Line 100 And the costly aromatic wood from the beds is smashed,
{...} their {...}
Verily, builders arrive, but they depart as mere farm hands,
And those who once sailed in the Royal barque are now harnessed to it.
Verily, none indeed voyage north to Byblos today.
What then are we to do for cedar trees for our mummies?
For the priests are entombed in the wood of such trees,
And the Nobles even as far as Keftiu are embalmed with the oil thereof.
But these things arrive here no longer.
Gold too is no more.

Line 110 And the materials for all workmanship have been depleted.
Even the contents of the Royal palace Life Prosperity and Health have been despoiled.
How significant it is when the men of the oases come with their goods,
Rugs, pelts, fresh redmet plants, and bird oil to sell for profit.
Verily Elephantine and Thinis which is in Coptos of Upper Egypt
No longer pay tax because of conflict.
Vanished now are grain, charcoal, blue dye, maa wood, nut wood, and Brushwood,
The works of the artisans, the bitter gourd, be mit, those things which

Line 120 Are the revenues of the palace.
Of what use is a treasury without its income?
Indeed the heart of a king is content only when his tribute comes to him.
Moreover, all the foreigners claim:
“This is our water! These are our crops!”
And what can we do about it?
Things have fallen into ruin.
Verily, rejoicing is perished and no longer arises;
It is grief which pervades the land, mingled with lamentation.

Line 130 Verily, every worthless man is now on of note,
And those who were Egyptians have become aliens and cast out.
Verily, everyone’s hair has become thin,
And no one can tell an honorable man from one who is worthless.
Verily, deafness has set in with regards to complaints,
There is no honesty of speech in this time of complaints,
And there is no end of complaints.
Verily, old and young say, “I would rather be dead.”
And even little children say, “No one should have given me life.”
Verily, the children of the Nobles are smashed against the walls,

Line 140 And suckling children are thrown out onto the desert.
Verily, bodies which were in the tombs are cast out onto the desert,
And the skills of the embalmers are undone.
Verily, vanished are those things which were seen yesterday,
And the land is remnants of its own weakness like the trimmings of flax.
Verily, the entire Delta, there is nothing protected therein,
And Lower Egypt relies on roads freely traveled by all.
What can be done?
There is no means of escape in any place,
And men cry out, “Down with the sanctuary!”

Line 150 Behold, it is under the control of the impious as of the pious,
And nomads are now experts in the professions of the Delta.
Verily, citizens are consigned to work the millstones,
And those who were once clothed with fine linen are unjustly beaten.
Those who once did not see the daylight can now go out with no restraint;
As for those who once were in the beds of their husbands,
let them now sleep on the ground.
Those who used to say, “It is too heavy for me”
About a package of myrrh

Line 160 Are now laden down under vessels filled with grain
And are no longer accustomed to be carried in litters.
As for the butler, he no longer exists,
And there is no cure for this.
Noble ladies bewail their lot like maidservants;
Musicians are at the looms in the place of weaving,
While their lays to Meret are laments,
And the tellers of tales are at the milestones.
Verily, all maidservants are mean mouthed,
But let the mistress speak, and it vexes the servants.

Line 170 Verily, trees are hewn down and the branches knocked off,

And the servants of a man's house have driven him out.
Men will both say and hear,
"Food is lacking for numerous children,
And there is no sustenance from the different grains.
What would it taste like now?"
Verily, the Nobles perish from hunger,
And men follow those who once themselves were followers,
For the arm of the violent is protection and succor.
Verily, the unruly man says,

Line 180 "If I knew where God is, I would serve him."
Verily, Ma'at pervades the land, at least in name,
But what men do is lawlessness, establishing themselves upon it.
Verily, one must be quick to fight for what belongs to him,
Or he will be robbed and all his property seized.
Verily, even all the animals, their hearts weep,
And the cattle lament the condition of the land.
Verily, the children of the Nobles are smashed against the walls,
Suckling children are thrown out onto the desert,
And Khnum groans because he is weary.

Line 190 Verily, horror commits murder,
The fearful man prevents those who would act against your foes,
And only a remnant are unharmed and safe, only a few.
It is by stalking the crocodile and destroying it?
Is it by slaughtering the lion and roasting it on the fire?
It is by sprinkling water for Ptah and bringing offerings
Why do you give to him?
For it does not reach him.
It is only trouble that you offer him.
Verily, servants rule {...} throughout the land,

Line 200 The strong man issues orders to everyone,

And a man strikes his maternal brother.
What are these things which have come to pass?
I can cry only “Destruction!”
Verily, the roads are avoided and the paths are ambushed,
Men crouch in the bushes until the arrival of a traveler at night
In order to seize his burden and to take what he is carrying;
He is attacked with blows of a cudgel and fouly murdered.
Verily, vanished are those things which were seen yesterday,
And the land is remnants of its own weakness like the trimmings of flax.

The peasants wander about aimlessly because of the desolation,
And goldsmiths are employed on the canals.
If only this were the end of men!
No more conceiving! No more giving birth!
Then the land would be hushed from its discord,
And its turmoil would be no more.
Verily, men feed on wild plants and wash them down with water,
For they can find neither fruit, nor herbs, nor fowl;
They seize the slops from the mouths of pigs.
No one is cheerful, for all have succumbed to hunger.

Verily, grain is depleted everywhere,
And men are deprived of clothing, perfume, and oil.
Everyone says, “There is nothing left.”
The warehouse is bare and its attendant stretched out on the earth.
All joy is lacking to my heart; I’am totally undone!
If only I had uttered my words at the proper time,
For it would have rescued me from the suffering into which I have fallen.
Verily, the sacred chamber, its writings are stolen,
And the place of secrets, which was therein, is disclosed.
Verily, the sacred spells have been exposed,

Incantations and rituals have been invalidated

Through being known by the people.
Verily, the offices opened and their records pillaged;
Men who once were serfs have now become owners of serfs.
Verily, scribes are murdered, and their writings are stolen;
How evil is my plight through the misery of our time.
Verily, the scribes of the land registry, their records are destroyed,
And the grain of Egypt is up for grabs.
Verily, the decrees of the council chamber are tossed aside;
Moreover, men walk on them in public,

Line 240 And the rabble smash them in the streets.
Verily, the pauper has acquired the rank of the Ennead,
And the business of the House of the Thirty is laid bare.
Verily, the great council chamber is open to all,
Paupers came and go in the great palaces.
Verily, the children of the Nobles are cast into the streets;
The wise man says “Yes!” while the fool says “No!”
And he who understands nothing of it finds it pleasing in his sight.
Verily, bodies which were in the tombs are cast out onto the desert,
And the skills of the embalmers are undone.

Line 250 Behold now, a fire has blazed up to the height,
And its flames goes forth against the land.
Behold now, deeds are done which have never before occurred,
For the king has been overthrown by the rabble.
Behold, he who was buried as a falcon now sleeps on a bier,
And what the pyramid once held hidden will now be wanting.
Behold now, the land begins to lose the kingship
At the hands of a few men who ignore tradition.
Behold now, there arises rebellion
Against the mighty Uraeus of Re who contents the Two lands.

Line 260 Behold, the secret of the land, whose limits are unknown, is laid

bare,
And the residence could fall at any moment.
Behold, Egypt has begun to pour water,
And he who once irrigated the land has carried off the mighty in misery.
Behold, the serpent has been wrenched from its lair,
And the secrets of the kings of Upper and Lower Egypt are laid bare.
Behold, the residence is fearful because of want,
And everyone will arouse strife with no opposition.
Behold, the land is fettered by mobs,
And as for the brave man, the craven seizes his property.

Behold, the serpent devours the dead,
And he who could not make a coffin for himself
Is now the owner of a tomb.
Behold, those who once owned tombs
Are thrown out onto the desert plateau,
While he who could not make a grave for himself
Is now owner of a treasury.
Behold now what men have become:
He who could not build for himself a single chamber
Is now the owner of a mansion.

Behold, the judges of the land are driven away throughout the land,
And those who once herded bulls are now in the royal palace.
Behold, Noble ladies now sleep on the floor,
And princes are in the workhouse.
Behold, {...}
While he who did not have a floor on which to sleep
Is now the owner of a bed.
Behold, he who once owned wealth now spends the night in thirst,
While he who once begged dregs for himself has overflowing bowls.
Behold, those who once owned robes are in rags,

Line 290 While he who could not weave for himself is the owner of fine linen.
Behold, he who could not build a boat for himself
Is now the owner of a fleet,
While their former owner can only gaze at them,
For they no longer belong to him.
Behold, he who had no shelter is now the owner of a shelter,
While those who once had shelters are in the blast of the tempest.
Behold, he who could play the lyre is skilled on the harp,
And he who could not sing for himself now praises Meret.
Behold, those who once owned bronze vessels,

Line 300Not one of them has garlanded jars.
Behold, he who once slept wifeless through poverty
Can now find Noble women,
And he who was inconspicuous
Now stands in a position of importance.
Behold, he who had nothing is now the owner of wealth,
And the official favors him.
Behold, the poor of the land have become the wealthy,
And he who owned property now has nothing.
Behold, cupbearers have become the masters of butlers,

Line 310 And he who was a messenger now sends someone else.
Behold, he who did not have a loaf is now the owner of a storehouse,
But his storeroom is stocked with the property of another.
Behold, he who had lost his hair and was lacking in oil
Has become the owner of jars of sweet myrrh.
Behold, she who had no box is now the owner of a chest,
And she who used to look at her face in the water now owns a mirror.
Behold {...}
Behold, a man is contended when he eats his food,
So consume what you with joyful heart

Line 320 While there is still nothing preventing you.
It is pleasant for a man to eat his food,
And God ordains it for the one whom he has favored.
..... (*Missing verse*)
Behold now, he who did not know his God now makes offering to him
With incense belonging to another whom he does not even know.
Behold, Noble ladies, highborn and possessors of wealth,
Now sell their children in exchange for provisions.
Behold now, a lowly man takes a Noble woman as his wife,
And her father supports him so that he may not kill him.
Line 330 Behold, the children of magistrates are in rags,
And the calves of their cattle are surrendered to robbers.
Behold, the serfs slaughter cattle,
And the poor have become robbers.
Behold, he who did not slaughter for himself now slaughters bulls,
And he who did not know how to carve now sees all choice meats.
Behold, the serfs slaughter geese
Which are given to the Gods instead of oxen.
Behold, maidservants {...} make offerings of ducks,
And Noble women {...}

Line 340 Behold, Noble women flee in one single flight,
Their hearts failing through fear of death.
Behold, the chiefs of the land flee;
They have no function through lack of one to back them.
Behold, those who once owned beds sleep on the ground,
While he who spent the night in squalor
Is now one spreads a leather mat for himself.
Behold, Noble ladies have fallen upon hunger,
While serfs are satisfied with what had been made ready for them.
Behold, no function is in its proper place,

Line 350 Like a herd wandering aimlessly without its herdsman.

Behold, the cattle wander off with no one to collect them,
And every man takes for himself the one branded with his name.
Behold, a man can be slain in the presence of his own brother,
And he deserts him in order to save himself.
Behold, he who did not have a pair of oxen
Is now the owner of a herd,
And he who could not find oxen for ploughing
Is now the owner of cattle.
Behold, he who had no grain is now the owner of a granary,

Line 360 And he who used to borrow grain now lends it out.
Behold, he who had no dependants is now the master of serfs,
And he who was a director is now one who conducts his own affairs.
Behold, the mighty of the land,
The condition of the people is not recounted to them,
For everything has been destroyed.
Behold, all the artisans no longer work,
For the enemies of the land have ruined its artisans.
Behold, he who reported the harvest now knows nothing of it,
While he who did not plough for himself is now rich ingrain.

Line 370 The harvest is carried out, but is not reported;
As for the scribe, his hands are idle at his post.
Destroy {...}
{...} his {...} in his time.
A man regards his brother as his enemy,
And the weak man brings coolness {...}
{...} in the office is fearful.
No {...}
The wretched {...}
The land does not brighten because of it.

Line 380 Destroyed {...} their food is seized from them.

The pauper begs {...} the messenger,
But no {...} time.
He is seized while burdened with his property,
And he is robbed {...},
Men pass by his door.
The *Wab* priest sits outside the wall
In the office of the rooms containing falcons and rams,
A vigil without dawn.
As for the commoner, he is watchful,

Line 390 So that the day may dawn on him without his fearing it.
Men flee as if driven by the wind.
Those who once worked with fine linen in a house,
Now all they make are tents like the nomads.
No longer are commissions carried out by servants on the business of
Their masters,
For there is no readiness on their part to do so.
Even though there are five men yet they all say:
“Take care of that yourself! You know that we have just come back!”
The Delta weeps, for the Royal storehouse is up for grabs by everyone,

Line 400 And the entire Royal palace Life, Prosperity and Health lacks its income.
To it are due grain and barley, fowl and fish;
To it are due white fabric and fine linen, bronze and oil;
To it are due carpets and mats {...} blossoms and sheaves,
Every fine work which should arrive expertly fashioned.
If there is dearth of these in the Royal palace, Life, prosperity and Health,
Then no one can be free from the lack of them.
Destroy the enemies of the Noble Residence, glorious in its Nobles,
Who {...} in it like {...}
..... (*Missing verse*)

Line 410 For the ruler of the city must go about without his escort.
Destroy the enemies of the Noble Residence, glorious in {...}
..... (*Missing verse*)
Destroy the enemies of that Noble Residence, abundant in laws,
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
Destroy the enemies of that Noble Residence {...}
For {...} its {...}
Destroy the enemies of that Noble Residence {...}

Line 420 For none can stand {...}
Destroy the enemies of that Noble Residence, abounding in offices,
For verily {...}
Remember the anointing of {...}
One who suffers due to the sickness of his body.
Give respect to {...}
{...} because of his God.
He will guard his mouth {...}
{...} and his offspring will witness the rising of the Nile flood.
Remember to replenish the shrine, to make offering of incense,

Line 430 And to pour a libation from a vessel at dawn.
Remember to bring fat ro-geese, terep geese, and set geese
And to sacrifice sacred offerings to the Gods.
Remember to chew natron and to prepare white bread,
As is done by a man on the day of the anointing of the head.
Remember to set up flagpoles and to carve offering tables,
As the priest purifies the sanctuaries,
The house of the God is plastered as white as milk,
The fragrance of the horizon is made sweet,
And offerings of bread are presented.

Line 440 Remember to observe the ordinances, rightly to assign the dates,
And to expel him who is initiated as a priest despite physical impurity,
For this is undertaking it wrongly,
This is malevolence of heart.
Remember the day which precedes eternity,
The months which are numbered and the years which are known.
Remember to slaughter oxen,
{...} from the best which you have on record.
Remember to go forth and seek the God who summons you,
To place a ro-goose on the fire {...},

Line 450 To open the jar, and to make offering on the banks of the Nile flood.
Remember {...}
{...} of women
..... (*Missing verse*)
{...} clothing.
{...} to offer praise,
..... (*Missing verse*)
{...} to content you.
{...} through lack of people.
Come {...}

Line 460 {...} of Re who commands {...}
{...} while revering him, the one who journeys to the west,
To weaken those who are by the Gods.
Behold, why does God even consider creating man,
When the peaceful man is not distinguished from the aggressive?
Let him but bring coolness upon their passion, and men will say:
“He is the shepherd of all mankind, and there is no evil in his heart.”
Small is his herd,
But he had had to spend the entire day to herd them
Because of the fire in their hearts.

Line 470 Would that he had perceived their nature in the first generation!
Then he would have smitten their sinfulness
And extended his arm against it;
He would have destroyed herds of them and their heirs.
Yet men desire to procreate,
And so sorrow has come to be, and misery on everyside.
Such is the way it is, and never will it end,
As long as the gods exist in the midst of it all
And the seed issues forth from the wives of men.
None may be found upon the right way,

Line 480 But only struggle has come forth.
The chastiser of crimes is the one who devises them,
And there are no pilots on watch.
Where is God today? Does he indeed sleep?
Behold, his power is no more seen.
Though we have been afflicted,
Yet did I not find you?
You did not call to me in vain.
“Resistance against these things means only discouragement.”
These words are now on the mouth of everyone,

Line 490 For today those who fear these things are more than millions of men,
And no defenders against our enemies can be seen.
{...} the tumult in his outer hall
Has entered into the temple {...}
The south erners weep for him {...}
Behold him! He is the one who acts so that his words are contradicted.
How often the land {...}
Has not the land fallen? {...}
The statues are burned, and their workshops are destroyed.
Everyman is on his guard,

Line 500 For he sees the day of calamity now established.
The universal Lord, who has made for himself a division between heaven
And earth,
Has become fearful for everyman.
If he does not act in our defense, who then will,
If you refuse to save?
Authority, perception, and Ma’at are with you,
But it is confusion which you have permitted throughout the land
Along it the noise of tumult.
Behold, one man strikes out at another,

Line 510 For men transgress against what you have decreed.
Of three men set out on a journey, only two arrive,
For the many kill the few.
Is there indeed a shepherd who desires death?
Then you may command that such be done.
There is now a destruction of affection,
For one man hates the other.
Now there is a reduction in men’s persons everywhere,
And it is you who have behaved so that this might come to pass,
For you have spoken falsehood.

Line 520 The land is now a bitter weed which destroys mankind,
And none can be certain of life.
Through all these years there is conflict,
And a man can be murdered on the roof of his own house.
Let him be vigilant in his gatehouse,
And if he is strong, he may save himself.
This is life!
Men devise crimes even against a commoner:
He travels on the road until he sees the ambush;
The road is blocked, and he stops in fear.

What he has with him is seized,
And he is attacked with blows of a cudgel and cruelly murdered.
Would that you might taste even a little such misery!
Then you would say, “Keep silent no longer!”
..... (*Missing verse*)
{...} his {...} as a guard on the wall,
As well as {...}
..... (*Missing verse*)
[...] hotter than the body.
The years when speech was uttered {...}

..... (*Missing verse*)
Verily, it is good when ships sail southward {...}
..... (*Missing verse*)
And no robbers plunder them.
Verily, it is good {...}
..... (*Missing verse*)
Verily, it is good when the net is pulled in,
And men tie up the birds in the evening.
Verily, it is good when {...} honors for them,
When the roads are open to travel.

Verily, it is good when men’s hands construct pyramids,
When pools are dug, orchards planted with trees worthy of the Gods.
Verily, it is good when men drink deep,
When they drink strong liquor, and their hearts rejoice.
Verily, it is good when shouts of joy are in men’s mouths,
When the lords of the estates stand
Watching the rejoicing in their houses,
Dressed in fine linen,
Their foreheads anointed, and secure for the future.
Verily, it is good when beds are prepared,

Line 560 When the headrests of the Nobles are well secured,
When all men's wants are satisfied by a couch in the shade,
And a door is shut to protect him who used to sleep in the bushes.
Verily, it is good when fine linen is laid out on New Years Day,
{...} on the bank,
When fine linen is laid out, and cloaks spread on the ground,
When the keeper of the cloaks {...}
..... (*Missing verse*)
{...} trees,
And the common folk are {...}

Line 570 ..... (*Missing verse*)
{...} they {...} acts of robbery
{...} while sailing southwards.
The Delta is confined {...}
{...} in their midst like Asiatics.
..... (*Missing verse*)
But men ignore their schemes,
And so bring about their own doom,
And none can be found who will arise
And defend themselves against the Libyans and Asiatics.

Line 580 Each man fights only for his sister and protects himself.
Are Nubians the threat? Then we shall protect ourselves,
For the warriors are numerous to drive back the foreign bowmen.
Is it Lybians? Then we shall route them,
For the Medjay are friendly with Egypt.
But how? For everyman slays his own brother,
And the troops we recruited for ourselves have become foreigners
And have turned to pillaging.
The outcome of that will be to let the Asiatics realize the condition of the Land.

But all the foreigners are still held in awe of it,
And what the peoples have experienced is enough to say:
“Egypt will not be subjected to the desert;
She will be victorious because of her walls.”
But this will be said of you in later years:
“{...} destroyed itself.”
It is time {...} their {...} will give life to his children.
There will be {...}
What has been brought to pass is that there will not be {...}
{...} said

The troops {...}
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
{...} make sandals for yourselves
.....
Bonds {...} resin,
Lotus leaves, reeds, {...}

{...} in excess of the provisions {...}
You have deceived the whole populace!
It seems that your heart prefers to ignore the troubles.
Have you done what will make them happy?
Have you given life to the people?
They cover their faces in fear of the morning!
Once there was a man who had grown old and was approaching death,
And his son was a child still without understanding.
He began to defend {...}
But he could not open his mouth to speak to you,

Line 620 And you robbed him even in the agony of death.
Weep {...}
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)
..... (*Missing verse*)

Line 630 {...} after you,
The land will be {...}
{...} on every side.
If men call to {...}
The people of the land weep because of their enemies
Who have entered the funerary temples
And burned the images.
Destroyed are {...}
And the bodies of the mummies are carried off {...}
How evil {...}

Line 640 {...} of the director of works
..... (*Missing verse*)

The rest of the text is missing. It is unfortunate, as the dialogue between the pharaoh and Ipuwer begins to appropriate blame for the chaos that now hangs over Egypt. But a sense of restoration seems to be at hand.

APPENDIX B

The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt

New Kingdom	**1550–1069 BC**
18th Dynasty	1550–1295 BC
Ahmose (Nebpehtyra)	1550–1525 BC
Amenhotep (Djeserkara)	1525–1504 BC
Thutmose I (Aakheperkara)	1504–1492 BC
Thutmose II (Aakheperenra)	1492–1479 BC
Thutmose III (Menkheperra)	1479–1425 BC
Queen Hatshepsut (Maatkara)	1473–1458 BC
Amenhotep II (Aakheperura)	1427–1400 BC
Thutmose IV (Menkheperura)	1400–1390 BC
Amenhotep III (Nebmaatra)	1390–1352 BC
Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten (Neferkheperurawaenra)	1352–1336 BC
Neferneferuaten (Smenkhkara)	1338–1336 BC

Tutankhamun (Nebkheperura)	1336–1327 BC
Ay (Kheperkheperura)	1327–1323 BC
Horemheb (Djeserkheperura)	1323–1295 BC

—By Ian Shaw,
exerpt from Chronological listing, pages 484 and 485

Notes

Preface by John Ward

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2. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 127.
3. Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 188–210.
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6. *www.nbufront.org/MastersMuseums/JHClarke/HistoricalPersonalities/hp3*
7. Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 26.
8. Aling, *Egypt and Bible History*, 72–73.
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10. Shaw, *The Oxford History*, 236–237.
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13. Aling, *Egypt and Bible History*, 73–74.
14. Shaw, *The Oxford History*, 228–229, 230, 232–233, 262.
15. Wilson, "Queen Who Would Be King."

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1. McMurray, "Dating the Amarna Period."
2. Elmallah, "Regional Climate Interaction."
3. Michael C. Carlos Museum, Malqata reports and entries.
4. O'Connor and Cline, *Amenhotep III*.
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7. Freud, *Der Mann Moses*.

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